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Sharm al-Shaykh Peacemakers Summit

Peacemakers Summit: Mubarak on Summit, Syrian Stand, Terrorist Operations

NC1203180796 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1645 GMT 12 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Sharm al-Shaykh, 12 Mar (MENA) — President Husni Mubarak reiterated the fact that the peace process is the main topic of the peacemakers summit to be held tomorrow in Sharm al-Shaykh. He said: The issue of terrorism alone has its place in another conference. Terrorism disrupts the peace process, and we are discussing its causes and working to give momentum to the peace process.

President Mubarak made these statements today after inspecting the Orangerie Hall where the summit will be held.

He added: Terrorism must be denounced. We are discussing this issue that is hampering the attainment of peace.

In response to a question on whether concrete measures will be taken at this summit, Mubarak said: I cannot foresee this at this time. We should wait until all the participating delegations arrive and discussions with them begin. We will then see the results that can be achieved.

In response to a question on whether the absence of some parties will result in the absence of discussion about their specific involvement in the peace process, Mubarak said: What concerns us now is the crux of the problem, that is the Palestinian issue. Following the recent explosions, in which one organization claimed responsibility and another denied responsibility, we are discussing what happens after the suspension of the Palestinian-Israeli agreement. We are discussing what we can do about this issue, which is the crux of the problem. He went on to say: Syria was proceeding with the negotiations process, but the operations that halted the Palestinian track caused a halt in all tracks. We will see what we can do.

In response to a question on whether some Palestinian organizations can carry out such operations despite the severe security precautions taken by the Israeli authorities, Mubarak said: Terrorist actions are motivated by money [tuharrikuha al-amwal], and they can happen anywhere in the world. There are terrorist acts in the United States and in London by the Irish Republican Army [IRA]. These operations also occur in other major countries, such as France and Japan. Not all these incidents are the work of extremist Islamic groups as some have implied.

Mubarak added: We see the IRA in Britain, and in the United States, there are some Americans who carry out terrorist operations. Even Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin was assassinated in Israel.

In response to another question on whether there is a mechanism for acting on and implementing the resolutions issued by the summit, Mubarak said: I cannot tell now what the resolutions will be, therefore, we cannot speculate about the type of mechanism. We are still holding consultations about this issue. He explained that the summit delegations are expected to issue a statement.

In response to a question on whether a five-sided meeting will be held on the sidelines of the summit as some reports have said, Mubarak said that no decision has been made on this matter.

Peacemakers Summit: Mubarak Warns Against Israeli Measures Against Palestinians

NC1303064996 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 0500 GMT 13 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Husni Mubarak has emphasized that all the leaders who attend the Sharm al-Shaykh international conference for peacemakers are determined to achieve the major objective of the conference, which is the continuation of the peace process. In statements on television last night, President Mubarak expressed hope that the peacemakers' summit is capable of achieving the high ambitions for which it is being held: Pushing peace forward and stopping terrorism. He also hoped that the summit's results give the peace process momentum.

President Mubarak pointed out that some time ago he called for an international conference to combat terrorism. He said that the periodic terrorist operations by both sides, the Israeli and the Palestinian, are to be expected because there are enemies of peace on both sides.

At the same time, President Mubarak said that peace is a very sacred mission. In statements to CNN, President Mubarak warned of the Israeli measures taken after the terrorist attacks in Jerusalem, Ashqelon, and Tel Aviv. President Mubarak explained that such measures could contribute more to increasing the wave of hatred than to bolstering peace. Mubarak warned that forces outside the region are behind the attacks that prompted the Israeli security measures, which include closing off many Palestinian areas. President Mubarak noted that some of the measures Israel has taken will not help the peace process.

Peacemakers Summit: Egypt's Musa Comments After Meeting U.S. Envoy on Summit Agenda

NC1203132696 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1206 GMT 12 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Sharm al-Shaykh, 12 Mar (MENA)—Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa today met U.S. Ambassador Edward Walker and other members of the U.S. delegation to the peacemakers summit due to be held here tomorrow.

The two sides viewed various points and issues that will be included in the summit agenda.

Minister Musa said after the meeting that he will hold intensive consultations and contacts with foreign ministers and senior officials who will participate in the summit. He added that later today he will meet Arab foreign ministers and Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat to discuss Egyptian-Palestinian coordination and set out all the Arab demands and concepts. He said he will meet his French and Spanish counterparts and various European ministers. He noted that there are no special issues of terrorism to be submitted to the summit but all the issues relating to the peace process and the denunciation of violence will be the subject of general debate among the delegations.

Peacemakers Summit: Egypt's Musa Regrets Syrian Absence From Summit

NC1203163896 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1500 GMT 12 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa has stressed that any meetings to discuss the peace process will be held within the context of the Madrid peace conference of 1991 and are equivalent to a follow up of the Madrid conference.

In statements today, Musa said that the peacemakers summit will principally focus on strengthening the Arab-Israeli peace process. As for the calls to hold a conference to be named the Madrid 2 conference, he said that Egypt has not received any official invitation to that effect.

Regarding Syria's participation in the Sharm al-Shaykh summit, 'Amr Musa said that Egypt has not received an official Syrian refusal to attend the summit, but it implicitly understands that Syria is not ready to attend the summit.

The Egyptian foreign minister regretted Syria's nonparticipation in the peacemakers summit because Syria and Lebanon are principal parties in the peace process. But, he added, this is Syria's own decision and we certainly respect it because the Syrians have their own reasons that caused them not to attend.

The foreign minister underlined the importance of the Palestinian track for the peace process. He said that the Palestinian issue is the crux of the Arab-Israeli conflict and hence reaching a solution on this issue means reaching the crux of the peace process.

Peacemakers Summit: Egyptian Minister Notes Security Measures at Sharm al-Shaykh

NC1203172696 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1630 GMT 12 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Cairo, 12 Mar (MENA)—Interior Minister Hasan al-Alfi has examined the measures adopted to secure the international peacemakers summit to be held in Sharm al-Shaykh tomorrow, Wednesday [13 March].

The interior minister discussed these procedures during a telephone call from the ministry's central operations room with Major General Mustafa 'Abd-al-Qadir, first assistant interior minister for security, who is in charge of the main operations room in Sharm al-Shaykh.

Major General 'Abd al-Qadir confirmed that forces have been provided to secure airports, roads, the routes delegations will take, as well as the delegations' residences. He also said that all the necessary security requirements were sent to Sharm al-Shaykh to secure all locations 48 hours before the delegations arrive in the city. He said that these security services will continue until the last delegation leaves the city. [passage omitted]

Peacemakers Summit: Mubarak Interviewed on Contacts With al-Asad

NC1203201196 Cairo ESC Television in Arabic 1800 GMT 12 Mar 96

[Interview with President Husni Mubarak by unidentified news unit correspondent in Sharm al-Shaykh on 12 March — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] [Correspondent] You held intensive contacts with the Arab side.

[Mubarak] I contacted some Arab leaders including President Hafiz al-Asad. He has his own reasons for not attending the conference. He said that his land is occupied, and he could not attend the conference. Had the conference been held in Madrid, on a land other than the Arab land that is occupied, he might have sent a delegate.

I contacted the Yemeni president. He said that he has some matters to attend to. He is sending the prime minister.

I contacted brothers in other states. The majority of the states are sending representatives.

Our contact with America continued until about one hour ago to determine the approach we will pursue and what we will do. We will resume our discussion when the U.S. President arrives tomorrow, God willing.

Peacemakers Summit: Egyptian Foreign Minister Interviewed on Summit

NC1303073896 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 0640 GMT 13 Mar 96

[Interview with Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa by correspondent Hana' al-Simari in Sharm al-Shaykh—live]

[FBIS Translated Text] [al-Simari] The two cosponsors of the international summit for peacemakers, President Husni Mubarak and U.S. President Bill Clinton, ended a one-hour meeting a short time ago. Could you explain the final touches that both presidents put to this summit due to begin today?

[Musa] As you know, the summit is chaired, rather cochaired, by Egypt and the United States—Presidents Mubarak and Clinton. Part of the meeting focused on the summit, running it, its results, discussions, and goals. The second part focused on the communique that might be released and followed up on issues. The third part dealt with the Palestinian situation. President Mubarak talked about the circumstances the Palestinian people are currently encountering and several issues relating to the economic and political situation and the importance of continuing the Palestinian track. President Mubarak stressed our deep interest in this issue and the required balance in relations with Israel and with the Palestinians regarding peace and the efforts at the conference.

[Al-Simari] The presidents met a short time ago and put the final touches to things. What about Egyptian views regarding the international summit for peacemakers?

[Musa] Egypt's views stem from the fact that as long as we are discussing peace and there is an ongoing peace process, then the general framework and substance of the communique must be the peace process and strengthening it. As I noted yesterday, there are three topics to be discussed at the summit. They are the basis of this summit: strengthening peace, safeguarding security, and confronting violence. There is a balance among these topics. This is not an antiterror conference, but a conference to safeguard peace in every sense of the word.

[Al-Simari] Egypt, which seeks to achieve peace in the region, also seeks stability and prosperity through regional cooperation. Your comment?

[Musa] Yes, what you say is fine. We are trying to achieve these goals.

Peacemakers Summit: 'Source'—'Arafat To Propose Peace 'Coordination Bureau'

NC1303075196 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0640 GMT 13 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 13 Mar (MENA)—A ranking Palestinian source has stated that in his speech at the Sharm al-Shaykh summit today, President Yasir 'Arafat will propose the establishment of a permanent coordination bureau involving the parties involved in the peace process. Its aim will be to push the process forward. The bureau will include representatives from the two cosponsors — the United States and Russia — the European Union, Egypt, Palestine, Israel, and the regional parties to the peace process.

AL-AHRAM cites the Palestinian source today saying that 'Arafat's speech will contain many points. 'Arafat will confirm that the Palestinians will continue the peace process and will express their concern about rescuing it and using every means to make it move forward. The paper cites the Palestinian official saying that confronting terrorism is as much a political and economic issue as it is a security issue.

'Arafat's speech will also discuss the lesson learned from the events of the past two weeks. This lesson is about the importance of quickly moving toward the final solution negotiations between the Palestinian and the Israeli sides. He will demand that Israel lift the siege of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, a siege that could destroy the peace and cost it its credibility. He will ask Israel to guarantee that it will not revert to the methods of occupation, punishment, and collective siege against the Palestinian people.

Peacemakers Summit: Sha'th Comments on Summit, al-Baz Visit to Israel

NC1203210496 Cairo MENA in English 2023 GMT 12 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Sharm al-Shaykh, March 12 (MENA) — Member of the Palestinian Legislative Council Dr. Nabil Sha'th said that the meeting between President Husni Mubarak and Palestinian leader Yasir 'Arafat this evening tackled viewpoints on the Palestinian working paper that will be tabled before the peacemakers'summit. The Palestinian leader stressed during the meeting that Egypt is the pivot of the summit and the peace process in general, Sha'th said.

The Palestinian working-paper highlights three points, namely the continuation of the peace process, ending the

Israeli siege and the necessity of cementing cooperation against terrorism, he noted.

Sha'th said that first Foreign Undersecretary and Director of the President's Office for political affairs Dr. Usamah al-Baz's visit to Israel today was quite important.

Dr. al-Baz conveyed to the Israeli side the Palestinian view on the necessity that the summit centre on shoring up the peace process as a whole, the Palestinian Legislative Council member said.

Commenting on the obstacles that the peasce process faces, Sha'th said that there is no other way but to go on the road of peace to counter terrorism and strengthen stability and development in the region.

The Palestinian Authority will stand firmly against and neutralise Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] or any other organization that tilts toward terrorism, he said.

Terrorism can not be encountered with security arrangements alone but there should be a continuous political process and hope for a stable future, he said, pointing out that more attention has to be accorded to the economic side.

The resumption of the peace process in the future will be a testimony to the success of the peacemakers' conference, the Palestinian legislator said.

The Palestinian people now live in critical conditions, suffering from hunger and siege, Sha'th said.

Peacemakers Summit: Mubarak Says Conference Sends 'Clear Message' to Parties

NC1303091696 Cairo ESC Television in Arabic 0832 GMT 13 Mar 96

[Remarks by President Husni Mubarak to unidentified correspondents at Sharm al-Shaykh Airport on 13 March—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Correspondent] Mr. President, can we say that history is repeating itself? When Egypt resorted to sober reasoning and international law it regained Taba. That was a triumph for Egyptian diplomacy and for Egypt's leaders. Is Egypt addressing a new message to the negotiators by hosting the peacemakers conference?

[Mubarak] Yes, and I believe it is a clear message. Like other nations, we are a nation that loves peace. We want to solve outstanding issues by peaceful means, not violence. We are hosting a conference based on peace and devoted to the search for ways to eliminate all the obstacles to the peace process.

[Correspondent] Have specific proposals or working papers been submitted? Or will points of view be freely exchanged during the conference?

[Mubarak] We will wait until the conference begins. We will discuss these points: peace, security [preceding word in English], and terrorism. We will listen to the views submitted by the world's leaders and, God willing, we will reach a conclusion.

[Correspondent] You have put the final touches to the conference with the help of President Bill Clinton, the other sponsor of the meeting. Can Your Excellency brief us on these particulars of the conference?

[Mubarak] I cannot tell you about the final touches to the conference until the other leaders have had the opportunity to see them. Some of them might like to make comments on them. The conference must issue a statement that will make allowances for any observations made by this or that country. Peace is the objective for all of us.

[Correspondent] Will the conference, God willing, achieve its aims?

[Mubarak] It will succeed and attain its objectives. With Egypt around, we must necessarily succeed.

Peacemakers Summit: Spain's Gonzalez Convinced Peace Process Can Be Salvaged

BR1303130496 Madrid EFE in Spanish 1946 GMT 12 Mar 96

[Unattributed report: "Middle East Summit — Gonzalez Confident That Meeting Will Increase International Cooperation"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Sharm al-Shaykh, Egypt (EFE) — Spanish Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez said today that he was confident that the antiterrorist summit due to kick off here tomorrow on the shores of the Red Sea will help increase international cooperation in this area.

Gonzalez arrived in Sharm al-Shaykh, in the south of the Sinai peninsula, this evening to attend tomorrow's meeting of world leaders committed to strengthening the Middle East peace process against the terrorism of the radical groups that are threatening it.

In this respect, the acting Spanish prime minister said on his arrival at the airport that he is convinced that the peace process in the region can be salvaged.

In a short statement, Gonzalez said that in addition to "accelerating" cooperation between nations to face up to terrorism, the meeting must also promote international solidarity with the countries suffering from this phenomenon.

In the same spirit, the Spanish prime minister said that among the measures he hoped would be adopted at the meeting was the possibility of some kind of agreement between the secret services of each country as proof of increased cooperation.

Felipe Gonzalez is just one of the more than 20 heads of state and government who will attend the summit which will be cochaired by U.S. President Bill Clinton and the Egyptian President Husni Mubarak.

Peacemakers Summit: Egypt's Musa Meets Saudi Foreign Minister, Comments on Summit

NC1203151696 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1230 GMT 12 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa met today with Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal who arrived at Sharm al-Shaykh airport to head his country's delegation to tomorrow's peacemakers summit.

Following the meeting, 'Amr Musa said that his meeting with Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal came within the context of Egypt's consultations with the Arab countries before the summit. He added that Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat will arrive in Sharm al-Shaykh this afternoon and that he will hold consultations with him, too.

The Egyptian foreign minister noted that Egypt and Israel are currently holding contacts and consultations. [passage omitted]

[Cairo MENA in Arabic at 1240 GMT carries a similar report and adds: "In response to a question about the impact of Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad's absence on the expected summit resolutions, Musa said: We were hoping that Syria would participate in this summit because its presence would have been an addition to the great role Damascus is playing as one of the peace process parties. But it is a sovereign Syrian decision not to attend, maybe for some specific reasons of their own.

["He added that the participants will do all they can within the framework of three main issues, namely bolstering peace, protecting security, and fighting violence. He said that the objective is to bolster the peace process, especially at this time, because there are difficulties on the Palestinian-Israeli track.

["In reply to a question on whether the summit discussions will focus only on bolstering peace on the Palestinian track, Musa said: I believe there is an opportunity to discuss all issues pertaining to peace on various tracks."]

Peacemakers Summit: Saudi Foreign Minister—Summit To Give Momentum to Peace

NC1203183396 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1530 GMT 12 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Sharm al-Shaykh, 12 Mar (MENA) — Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal expressed hope that the peacemakers summit will be able to solving all regional problems — all security, political, and economic problems equally.

Upon his arrival today, al-Faysal stated: We believe that this world gathering at the peacemakers summit will give momentum to the peace process.

Touching on Syria's absence from the summit, Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa, who received al-Faysal, said: We regret that Syria will not attend this summit. This is their own decision.

On whether the summit will come up with solutions concerning the peace process, Musa said: Some solution must come out of discussions during the summit.

Peacemakers Summit: Saudi Foreign Minister Meets Mubarak

LD1203215796 Riyadh SPA in Arabic 2120 GMT 12 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Sharm al-Shaykh, 12 Mar (SPA) — His Royal Highness Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal, the foreign minister, has pointed out that he has conveyed a message from the custodian of the two holy mosques, King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz Al Sa'ud, to His Excellency President Muhammad Husni Mubarak of the Arab Republic of Egypt. In a press statement made after his meeting today with President Mubarak, the foreign minister pointed out that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia looks forward to seeing the peacemakers' summit conference, which will be held here, concentrating on pushing the peace process forward and not allowing any obstacles, whether relating to the implementation of what has already been agreed upon or regarding violence which has recently prevailed in the region, to hinder that. His royal highness expressed the hope that the summit conference will have an impact on moving the peace process forward.

Peacemakers Summit: Libyan Minister Arrives, Proceeds to Sharm al-Shaykh

NC1203180396 Cairo MENA in English 1708 GMT 12 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed] Cairo, 12 Mar (MENA)—Libyan Secretary of Arab Unity Jum'ah al-Fazzani arrived here this afternoon. He directly headed to Sharm al-Shaykh, the venue of tomorrow's peacemakers summit.

Al-Fazzani declined to give any press statements on the nature of his mission in the Egyptian Red Sea resort.

Peacemakers Summit: Mubarak Receives 'Arafat, Palestinian Delegation

NC1203190296 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1830 GMT 12 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Sharm al-Shaykh, 12 Mar (MENA) — President Husni Mubarak received Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat this evening.

The meeting was attended by Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa on the Egyptian side. On the Palestinian side, attendees were Mahmud 'Abbas, alias Abu-Mazin, member of the PLO Executive Committee; Yasir 'Abd-Rabbuh, official in charge of the media in the Palestinian Authority; Dr. Sa'ib 'Urayqat, official in charge of local government in the Palestinian Authority; Nabil Abu-Rudaynah, political adviser to 'Arafat; and Zuhdi al-Qidrah, Palestine's ambassador in Cairo.

Peacemakers Summit: Jordanian Prime Minister Comments on Summit

NC1203193796 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1830 GMT 12 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Jordanian Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti arrived at Sharm al-Shaykh international airport this evening. He was received by Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa.

Upon arrival, the Jordanian prime minister stated that it has become clear that the battle of peace is by no means easier than the battle of war.

He said: We look forward with confidence and optimism to King Husayn's meeting with his brother President Husni Mubarak so that they can work together to give an impetus to the peace process. This is the noble approach to establish Arab rights and help the Palestinian people exercise the right to self-determination.

Responding to a question on Jordan's vision on how to fight terrorism, al-Kabariti said: We feel that this conference is a suitable and effective approach to achieving peace and confronting terrorism. He added that this confrontation must be at the international level. He expressed the hope that the peacemakers summit will take practical steps and measures to fight terrorism.

Al-Kabariti reiterated that the call for this summit was made to discuss the issue of peace, face up to terrorism, and obstruct those who want to ruin the noble goal of peace for the entire world.

Peacemakers Summit: Kuwaiti Foreign Minister's Arrival Statement

LD1203214596 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 2004 GMT 12 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Sharm al-Shaykh, 12 Mar (KUNA) — Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmad, Kuwaiti first deputy prime minister and foreign minister, tonight expressed his hope that the peacemakers' summit conference will be the beginning of the realization and continuation of peace and of putting an end to all the problems, especially those related to terrorism, and of confronting the latter by all states, since it is a phenomenon rejected by the entire world.

In a statement to KUNA, Shaykh Sabah pointed out on his arrival here to represent the state of Kuwait at the summit which begins tomorrow that he cannot offer a complete appreciation of the conference before knowing its aims through the discussions by the participating delegations and by reaching specific results. He added that Kuwait has no specific point of view to offer to the conference but it will participate in the discussions among the participants. Shaykh Sabah pointed out that he will be meeting a number of Arab foreign ministers on the periphery of the 105th session of the Arab League ministerial council which is scheduled to begin in Cairo on Thursday [14 March] to discuss a number of issues of common interest.

Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa and Kuwaiti Ambassador to Egypt Faysal al-Khalid welcomed Shaykh Sabah on arrival at Sharm al-Shaykh airport.

Peacemakers Summit: Foreign Ministers Hold Coordination Meeting, Musa Comments

NC1203225196 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2214 GMT 12 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Sharm al-Shaykh, 12 Mar (MENA) — The Arab foreign ministers taking part in the international summit of peacemakers held a meeting this evening in order to gather and coordinate positions in preparation for the summit.

Following the meeting, Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa said that the meeting discussed the views to be tabled during the summit and stressed the need to work for the success of this summit and to issue a balanced final statement. We are for peace and against all acts of violence, Musa stressed.

The foreign minister pointed out that the summit's success will consolidate and enhance peace efforts. He stressed that the peace agreements must be implemented and that acts of violence must be stopped. He said that the peace process is known, and the texts of its agreements have been agreed upon.

Musa said that the summit's final statement will not include what certain delegations leaked today about the suggested phrasing. He said that the Palestinians are taking obvious measures to resist violence. He added that Egypt demands an end to the closure of the West Bank and Gaza, since the continued closure is frustrating and will lead to violence.

In his statements, Musa affirmed that the summit will not be held to fight terrorism, but to enhance peace. He pointed out that terrorism hinders the peace process and that it should be addressed in that way to eliminate the obstacles obstructing the peace process.

Musa noted that the final communique will address the three points, which are the basis for the conference — namely, to enhance peace, protect security, and fight violence. He added that the conference will involve an economic factor to support the parties in the peace process.

Musa also affirmed that the final communique will call on all the parties to respect and implement what they agreed upon and signed.

He added that there is a disparity of views between Israel and the Palestinians and that this is a natural thing; but there is agreement on the objective, namely to continue the peace process, he said.

Commenting on Syria's absence from the summit, Musa said that Syria is an important party to the peace process. We regret its absence, but we are working to give momentum to the peace process and believe that comprehensive peace is not complete without Syria, he said.

Peacemakers Summit: UK's Major Issues Warning to Terrorists

LD1303010796 London PRESS ASSOCIATION in English 2329 GMT 12 Mar 96

[By Amanda Brown, chief political correspondent, in Cairo]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] John Major tonight issued a tough message to the world's terrorist organisations that their day is past and they will not be allowed to prevail.

His blunt warning came on arrival in Egypt where he is attending a special one-day "summit of the peacemakers".

Thirty heads of state from countries including America and Russia will take part in talks aimed at curbing the growth of violence against democracies.

The Prime Minister said the summit — which has been hastily arranged after a wave of recent suicide bombings in Israel — is aimed at supporting the international and regional efforts to keep the Middle East peace process moving forward. In common with other heads of state, Mr Major feels there is a compelling need to tackle a problem which he described in a statement "as one of the scourges of modern democracies".

"We know that in the UK. Shimon Peres knows it in Israel. Yasir 'Arafat knows it in the Palestinian areas. "Indeed, there will be hardly anyone among the 31 governments who will not have suffered at first hand terrorist violence aimed at subverting democracy and destroying peace.

"This summit is about how most effectively to show the terrorists that their day is past.

"Their creed is destruction. They will not be allowed to prevail, and dash the hopes of the people who wish for a peaceful future for them and their children."

Peacemakers Summit: Clinton, King Husayn Arrive in Sharm al-Shaykh

NC1303062996 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0608 GMT 13 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Sharm al-Shaykh, 13 Mar (MENA)—U.S. President Bill Clinton accompanied by King Husayn of Jordan arrived in Sharm al-Shaykh this morning to participate in the international summit for peacemakers, which will begin later today. President Husni Mubarak led the wellwishers who received the U.S. President and the Jordanian monarch.

Peacemakers Summit: 'Arafat Urges Confronting Palestinian, Israeli Extremists

NC1303064096 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2227 GMT 12 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 13 Mar (MENA)—Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat has stated that suspending and destroying the peace process will be a reward for the extremists on both the Palestinian and Israeli sides. In a statement at his place of residence in Sharm al-Shaykh tonight he said that the peacemakers conference must advance the peace process while international organizations must confront terrorism. He added that he thanked President Husni Mubarak for convening this conference with U.S. President Bill Clinton. He praised the constructive stance of Egypt and President Mubarak, standing by the Palestinian people, particularly in the difficult situation that the Palestinian people are encountering through the policy of closure, the Israeli security blockade, starving of the population, and failure to precisely implement the agreements reached in Washington and Cairo between the Palestinians and Israelis.

'Arafat stressed that President Mubarak's and Egypt's strength and central role and the major international gathering of leaders participating in the Sharm al-Shaykh conference will offer a clear and balanced outcome regarding the peace process. He said that concern for establishing a fair and comprehensive peace in the region will emerge so that the harm done by terrorism by extremists on both sides might be avoided.

Asked what he will request of the world leaders participating in the peacemakers conference, 'Arafat said: We must not let those terrorists who stand behind acts of terrorism—be they Palestinians or Israelis—attain their goal of halting the peace process, the peace of the brave. 'Arafat asked for not punishing the Palestinian people through the policy of closure and blockade that Israel is pursuing, noting that he will propose this to the summit.

Peacemakers Summit: Jordan's al-Kabariti Meets Saudi, Kuwaiti Foreign Ministers

JN1303082896 Amman Radio Jordan in English 0500 GMT 13 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The summit of the peacemakers begins its meetings at the Egyptian resort of Sharm al-Shaykh today aiming to give a new chance to the Middle East peace process and coordinating world efforts to fight terrorism.

The opening session will continue until 1 o'clock in the afternoon. Then, the world leaders will meet in a one-hour closed session, after which the Egyptian president will cochair with the U.S. President a press conference. A final communique will be issued after the press conference.

His Majesty King Husayn is scheduled to arrive at the meeting venue this morning and will address the opening session. A number of world leaders will deliver speeches, including the Egyptian, American, and Russian presidents as well as the head of the Palestinian self-rule authority.

The Jordanian delegation to the summit includes the Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti, the chief of Royal Court, his majesty the king's military secretary Prince Talal, his majesty the king's adviser Mustafa al-Qaysi, and other senior officials.

On the sidelines of the summit meetings, the Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti has discussed with the Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat the latest developments in the Middle East and the joint ideas before the Peacemakers Summit due to be opened in Egypt this morning.

Mr. al-Kabariti also met in his residence the Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal. The two talked about bilateral relations and means to enhance them in various fields as well as issues of mutual concern. The prime minister also met the Kuwaiti foreign minister and other Arab and world officials taking part in the summit.

Peacemakers Summit: Yemeni Foreign Minister's Sharm al-Shaykh Meetings Reported

JN1303091496 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0430 GMT 13 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Dr. 'Abd-al-Karim al-Iryani, deputy prime minister and foreign minister, received His Highness Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal, the Saudi foreign minister, at his residence in Sharm al-Shaykh in Egypt last night. They discussed relations between the two fraternal countries.

Dr. 'Abd-al-Karim al-Iryani visited Jordan's Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti and discussed with him relations between the two fraternal countries.

In another development, the deputy prime minister and foreign minister met with Rashid Bin-'Abdallah al-Nu'aymi, minister of state for foreign affairs in the fraternal United Arab Emirates [UAE]. The two sides discussed relations between the two fraternal countries. They also discussed the issue of the joint Yemeni-UAE committee, which will convene soon.

Talks during the three meetings also focused on the regional situation and developments in French mediation efforts to reach a peaceful solution to the Yemeni-Eritrean dispute.

Peacemakers Summit: Mubarak Addresses Summit

NC1303104796 Cairo ESC Television in Arabic 1005 GMT 13 Mar 96

[Speech by Egyptian President Husni Mubarak at the opening session of the summit in Sharm al-Shaykh—live]

[FBIS Translated Text] Your Excellencies Presidents Bill Clinton and Boris Yeltsin, sponsors of the Middle East peace conference; your majesties, your excellencies the heads of state, heads of government, the UN secretary general, and heads of delegations:

It pleases me to welcome you all to this part of Egypt, a place that links continents and civilizations and joins together peoples who look forward to coexistence and creative interaction on the road to peace, development, and progress. There is no doubt that your eagerness to attend this conference and enable it to reach its goals reflect your genuine commitment to the cause of peace and stability worldwide, particularly in the Middle East. In past years this area has been the venue for intense activity and tangible progress toward a just and comprehensive peace, ending half a century of bloody conflict, violence, and destruction and placing the region on the threshold of a new era of reconciliation and construction.

You have all participated in and supported this march from the time the Madrid conference was held in October 1991. It was natural for you to follow its developments with extreme interest and to stand with the region's peoples while confronting the obstacles and challenges facing the peace process and the dangers threatening its security and safety at a time when what this region needs most is to free itself for the process of development, reconstruction, and prosperity.

Your majesties, your excellencies: Perhaps you agree with me that our meeting must constitute an advanced step and a qualitative development in the diligent work toward achieving peace and reconciliation among peoples, consolidating equitable security among countries, moving away from using or threatening to use force, and intensifying the legitimate human struggle against all types and forms of terrorism, with special emphasis on the Middle East, a region of extremely strategic importance for all countries. This sublime goal requires the doubling of the efforts exerted to rescue peace, maintain its course, protect it from the threats of stagnation and setbacks, and generate a new momentum lighting the torch of hope in people's hearts. For this to be attained there must be hard and sincere work to achieve tangible progress on all tracks in the next few months, in an atmosphere free from violence, threats, and oppression. An atmosphere that safeguards the peoples' right to live in peace and security, free from fear, anxiety, and one people's condemnation of another simply because a small faction thereof has involved itself in terrorist operations, has fallen into the abyss of extremism, or committed sins that are not sanctioned by any religion or principle.

To the people of Palestine I say: O struggling people: You have suffered, resisted, and stood fast. He who knows his path is he who realizes the true goal of his struggle. Do not despair, surrender to false defeatist claims, or lose the proper perspective, especially after the wheel of peace has begun to turn with the backing of various countries and after support for the Palestinian cause has become a collective international commitment that is faithfully implemented. The entire international family will not let you down but will continue to support you to enable you to clear your path of obstacles blocking your movement and threatening your march forward, both at home and abroad. You must keep your decision in your own hands, free from pressure and fear. Your destiny belongs to you, your right to self-determination is firm and secure, and the future before you is full of hope.

To the Israeli people whose early forefathers lived amicably side by side with the Arabs for long centuries, establishing a relationship among Abraham's descendants on the basis of fraternity, amity, and mutual respect for each other's religious creeds and cultures, totally renouncing fanaticism, hatred, and racism, I wish to say: You doubtlessly realize that the future of the entire region, including Israel, hinges on the establishment of a just and comprehensive peace and stable security for all parties. Some negative but transient phenomena, even if they are painful, cannot be remedied by denying these values and principles or by losing faith in peace, squandering future hopes, or sinking into the abyss of extremism and fanaticism. These things can only restore the vicious cycle of violence and destruction.

A total commitment to peace is the only key to security and tranquility because those who threaten security are the enemies of peace. They want to abort the peace march and place obstacles in its way.

You can rest assured that the Arab nation bears you no grudge nor plans to attack you treacherously. The Palestinian people are your closest neighbors and your partners in the search for a better life. This nation has suffered just as you have from the attacks of reckless, destructive, extremists. This, however, has not shaken the faith of the vast majority of Palestinians in a just peace and a safe future.

To the friendly nations, in whose backing for our march of peace, reconciliation, and reconstruction we take much pride, we say that we appreciate this responsible position which demonstrates profound trust in the unity of human destiny and a strong moral commitment to the causes of peace, justice, and economic development.

To the leaders participating in this historic conference, I voice the hope that we will adopt specific steps and measures which will guarantee that the peace is safeguarded against the dangers and threats blocking its way and that we will formulate new mechanisms which will guarantee that we will make united efforts, backed by the entire international community, to repulse the forces of evil and terrorism and revive the hope of a better future among the youth.

Brothers and sisters, in the past, the peoples of this region lived through crushing wars and destructive and bloody conflicts. Their security remained threatened and their resources squandered until the time came to emerge from this dark tunnel. Successive steps were made along the road of peace, and negotiations started to strengthen the foundations of security for all the states of the region on an equal and balanced footing with a view to protecting all sides from the dangers of aggression and the threat to use brute force to impose situations out of line with the principles of right and justice.

But this progress along the road of peace and security annoyed the advocates of war and destruction. So they spread terrorism in the region to threaten security, undermine peace, and hinder development efforts. In their acts of sabotage, they leaned on the support of some foreign circles who do not desire good for the peoples of the Middle East. These circles supplied the terrorist groups with a great deal of money and weapons and offered them training and shelter. Other parties from outside the region were also driven into collusion with terrorism in another way: They granted the planners and perpetrators of terrorism asylum, and they covered up their movements, which the terrorists use to serve their criminal schemes.

Given this situation, I called, at an early stage, for the convening of an international conference on terrorism. I made a specific proposal on this to the European Parliament in Strasbourg in 1986. In all this, I was eager to clarify that the phenomenon of terrorism and extremism is not confined to a specific region, nor exclusively to a certain ethnic, religious, or cultural group. Specifically, it is not an Islamic phenomenon. It cannot be attributed to Islam and its esteemed precepts. It is a phenomenon hostile to Islam and Muslims as much as it is hostile to the followers of other religions and cultures.

Hence, we welcomed the convening of the international conference to combat terrorism in all its forms and shapes. The conference was held in the city of Bagio in the Philippines on 19 February and was attended by most of the countries now represented in this conference. The conference laid down several basic principles and positive resolutions that constitute the first step in the confrontation against the international terrorist groups. The conference placed the responsibility for combating and resisting terrorism by all means before all countries.

It remains for us in this big conference to adopt distinctly effective and firm resolutions and to forge policies and arrangements that protect the security and peace of the region from the threats they are facing, so that chances for carrying out these acts, which conflict with the most basic principle of humanity, will diminish, and so that the world community can expose the forces that stand behind and encourage these acts to serve their own criminal designs. Victory will ultimately be for the forces of virtue and construction. Glory to the peacemakers and to those who support justice, freedom, and security for every people looking forward to their right to a life free of fear and coercion. The future is for coexistence, reconciliation, and renunciation of war, violence, and destruction. Let there be peace on earth. Thank you. [applause]

Peacemakers Summit: Israel's Peres Addresses Summit

TA1303110296 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1032 GMT 13 Mar 96

[Speech by Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres at the summit in Sharm al- Shaykh on 13 March—live; in English; italicized passage in Hebrew]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Thank you President Mubarak, President Clinton, President Yeltsin, Your Majesties, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I would like to say a few words in my own language to my own people.

I wanted to speak in the name of my people who desire peace, but today, and here, I must first speak in pain and sorrow, in the name of children, women, and old people, and innocent civilians who were the victims of cruel terror. Since the murder of Yitzhaq Rabin, I have not known such great sorrow, and my heart prays: "He will swallow up death forever, and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces." [Isaiah 25, v. 8] May their memories be blessed.

Ladies and Gentlemen, nine days ago, on the eve of the festival of Purim, two 12-year-old boys went to celebrate at the Tel Aviv Mall. Yovav Levi and Qobi Zaharon were best friends. They had the innocence and the freshness of youth. Qobi studied in a class for gifted children. Yovav excelled at football. Their whole future was before them. Yet, in a split second, it came to an end at the hands of a crazed terrorist, a living bomb. Is there a God who permits a man to perform such a horrendous act? Is there a religion which allows one to commit suicide, to murder children?

Wars in the Middle East have claimed the lives of tens of thousands of young people. With every casualty, a whole world was lost. Yet, most of the victims fell during wars. Qobi and Yovav were murdered by the ultimate evil, in a war against ending wars. They were among the youngest victims of the recent terrorist attacks, but they were not alone. In Jerusalem, in Ashqelon, and in Tel Aviv other children, and ordinary people, young and old, Israelis and foreigners were killed. Grief struck many homes, and scores are still in pain. May the Lord comfort their sorrow and heal their pain.

Yes, we suffered pain, but not despair. We shall do all that it takes to defeat terrorism, just as we shall mobilize all the resources to further peace. Peace and security are indivisible. This gathering signifies the civilized world's rejection of the evil of terrorism and its support for the peace process. Momentous and practical decisions must emerge here today. This conference must formulate a strategy and create an enduring coalition to respond to the moral call and to answer the practical needs through international cooperation. Terrorism knows no borders, so borders must not restrain action to smash the terrorist snake.

This terrorism is not anonymous. It has a name, it has an address, it has a bank account, it has an infrastructure, it has a network camouflaged as charity organizations. It is spearheaded by a country — Iran. The Iranian people are not our enemy. Religion is not our foe. It is the regime which initiates, promotes, and exports violence and fanaticism. Tehran has become the capital of terror. A conclusion must be drawn on how to contain it.

From the Palestinians, with whom we wish to complete the historic conciliation, we demand the unequivocal fulfillment of the Oslo accords. We do not ask the Palestinian Authority to defend our lives. Only we shall defend ourselves. It is solely our responsibility. But the Palestinians must fulfill the obligations of an elected authority. They must fight to prevent terror, which is causing the hardship in their midst. They must not tolerate murderous command centers. They must not permit illegal guns to aim at legal peace agreements.

Terror threatens peace and stability in the whole world. Suicide methods and modern weapons are an immediate danger. It will escalate once terrorists may obtain nonconventional weapons. We are at a watershed. Our region is going through a period of transition. The dark days are at an end. The shadows of its past are still lengthening. The twilight of wars is still red with blood, yet its sunset is inevitable and imminent, as we will not yield to the enemies of peace.

The Middle East is on the verge of a new day, better and more promising. Many barriers which separated Israel from its neighbors are gone. Yesterday's enemies are gathered here today as partners in the battle for a different tomorrow. The hunting grounds of cynics and skeptics are diminishing. There is news in the Middle East: It will be a new Middle East.

I would like to thank all those present. First and foremost, the great American President, Bill Clinton, for his vital initiative. He proved not only his leadership of the free world, but he has also shown himself as a great facilitator of peace as an agenda of our time. I thank the cosponsor, President Yeltsin, whose presence here expresses his commitment to a new era. My gratitude goes to our host, President Mubarak of Egypt, the first to make peace, who offered the beauty of Sharm al-Shaykh as an invitation to a new political landscape. My appreciation is extended to the leaders of Europe and Asia, who helped to realize peace in the Middle East and to continue to do so today and tomorrow.

I also greet the leaders of the Arab countries present here, and would like to say that Israel, as it has proved in its negotiations with the Palestinians, is resolved not to dominate others. Israel does not seek to gain territory. Israel has proved that science is more important than territory. We can attain more at schools today than what we could conquer previously on the battlefield.

We are not here out of fatigue or weakness. We are here out of a moral preference and a sense of strength. Let your children and our children know a future of peace. Let them march, safe and sound, through the gates of the next century, free of fear, equipped with knowledge and wisdom, into a new era for mankind. In the words of the Bible: See, I have set before you today, life and good, and death and evil. I call heaven and earth to witness this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing — therefore choose life.

Ladies and Gentlemen, we have chosen life. Let us all unite to wipe out the curse of terror and to receive the blessing of peace. Thank you very much.

Peacemakers Summit: Turkey's Demirel Addresses Summit

TA1303121896 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1110 GMT 13 Mar 96

[Speech by Turkish President Suleyman Demirel at the summit in Sharm al-Shaykh on 13 March — live, in English]

[FBIS Translated Text] President Clinton, President Mubarak, distinguished presidents and heads of state: At the outset, I would like to thank you for convening this meeting of the summit of peacemakers, so appropriately named and so timely organized.

Terrorism is no longer the problem of any single country. On the contrary, terrorism, by making use of sophisticated technology alongside brutal and primitive methods, has become a global concern. It is threatening democratic systems, public order, and, above all, regional and global peace and stability.

Combating terrorism requires effective international cooperation. Unfortunately, compared to the collaboration seen among terrorist organizations, international cooperation falls far short of our expectations. One of the basic reasons that hinders the effective fight against terrorism, both at the national and international levels, is the lack of unified international response and established international laws. Diverse stands adopted by some countries against terrorism further weaken the combat. However, the most basic condition in combating terrorism is to establish international laws that would be of high effect and to implement them with determination, monitor which group it may come from or in whatever form it may occur.

A terrorist act is simply a terrorist act. Terrorist violence can neither be a valid nor a legitimate means to achieve political goals or to promote human rights or other rights. Any acceptance of the contrary would encourage the terrorist organizations to continue to carry our their violent activities and, at the same time, would be interpreted as a sign of defeat of the international community. In this respect, it is extremely significant that there should be no discrimination whatsoever in the fight against terrorism. The power and the determination should be ever present in order to totally eliminate it.

What is more disturbing is the support — implicit or explicit — given by some countries to terrorism. Indeed, the existence of countries which give shelter to terrorists and provide them with training facilities definitely makes it harder to effectively combat terrorism.

Here are a few suggestions that we believe will help eradicate terrorism, if implemented in earnest: Though measures must be taken to deter states that support terrorism or harbor terrorists, one such measure might be the imposing of economic sanctions. A significant part of combating terrorism as well as terrorist front organizations necessitates the banning of television and radio stations and other media that promote or support terrorism and terrorist organizations and that provide means for terrorists to disseminate their propaganda. A center that will collect and classify information on terrorist groups, their methods, and financial sources should be established. All states must fully cooperate to extend information to this center. Turkey is keen on participating in the establishment and operation of such a center.

All support should be extended to the countries that combat terrorism, and all technical material used in combating terrorism should be brought to the disposal of these countries. One of the most effective methods to combat terrorism is the unconditional extradition of the perpetrators of terrorist acts to their own countries. States should comply with the stipulations of the already existing international agreements in this field. This would be a significant contribution to reaching the ultimate target.

No political or other considerations should be advanced to avoid the extradition of terrorists. Another responsibility for all states toward countries combating terrorism is to find out the origins of the weapons and arms provided to the terrorists. It is the right of the international community to expect explanations from those countries that are the sources of these arms.

The recent sinister bomb attacks that took place in Israel were perpetrated to derail the Middle East peace process. We should not allow the terrorists to achieve their aims. However, peace has always been fragile. We are to work longer and harder to minimize the detrimental effects of those who oppose peace and stability. Let us not allow them to succeed. Let us take it as our common point to combat terrorism, which is the greatest threat to peace and stability. Thank you.

Peacemakers Summit: King Husayn Addresses Sharm al-Shaykh Summit

JN1303123996 Amman Jordan Television Network in Arabic 1055 GMT 13 Mar 96

[Speech by King Husayn of Jordan at the summit in Sharm al-Shaykh—live]

[FBIS Translated Text] In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful. Your Majesty, Your Highnesses, Your Excellencies: I greet you with the eternal greeting of Islam, which will always be synonymous with mercy and say: Peace and God's mercy and blessings be upon you.

Gentlemen: It is a good omen that we meet today on the soil of the big sister, Egypt, which God Almighty promised to grant it safety. In the Chapter of Yusuf, God says: Enter ye Egypt all in safety if it please God. [Koranic verse] We meet to discuss in this conference the issue of security and safety for all people in this sensitive part of the world, and in all the other parts of the world that were denied tranquility and stability.

Your Majesty, Your Highnesses, Your Excellencies: Allow me first to express my thanks and gratitude for those who bravely and decisively stood behind the idea of convening this conference, particularly His Excellency U.S. President Bill Clinton and His Excellency Brother Muhammad Husni Mubarak, who hosted this conference.

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, which believes that world peace is the way to rescue mankind, wishes to underline some indisputable facts:

1. The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan wishes to underline the need for a clear and decisive differentiation between the acts of terror and tolerant Islam. Islam, in which we take pride as a religion and a way of life, is based on tolerance and sets the way to hold dialogue, according to the Koranic verse: "And argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious."

Islam also differentiates between jihad, which is based on faith and which proceeds from respect for agreements and the inadmissibility of murdering innocent people, on the one hand, and terrorism and murdering and terrorizing innocent people on the other. We all believe that terrorism is not limited to any one race, or followers of any one religion, or to any one country. Over the past year, we saw the ugliest manifestations of terrorism in Tokyo, Oklahoma, London, Tel Aviv, Karachi, and Addis Ababa.

Based on the above, this phenomenon must be confronted on a world, not regional level. To be able to wipe out terrorism, we must find a world mechanism to define it, and to set the principles and the means to nip it in the bud, in terms of finance, training, and practice. We must also take the deterrent measures against any country that supports terrorism or sponsors its institutions and organizations. Within this context, terrorist organizations must be denied the opportunity to acquire some media organs or to win the support of some mass media that sympathize with them. This requires us all to set a mechanism that would enable states to easily exchange the security information related to the operations of terrorists, be they individuals or organizations, and to work on closing all the camps in which the elements of terrorism are trained.

2. There is a confusing overlapping in the terminology of this age which need a clear definition. We in the Middle East see much of this overlapping. Martyrdom does not mean suicide. Sacrifice does not mean terrorism. Jihad for the sake of God does not mean the killing of innocent people.

Peace is not just a slogan to be raised; it is a pattern of life that seeks to develop the resources of man and create prospects for true hope for mankind. Peace is a door for man's freedom and respect for his right to a free, secure, and decent life. We are dutybound to work together to save man from loss, despair, ignorance, and frustration, which, together, open a door that leads to crime and terrorism. Frustration, despair, poverty, and ignorance cannot coexist with peace in one region.

Based on the above, we in this part of the world must shoulder our responsibilities, not only by denouncing terrorism but also by helping all those in this world who work to protect the dignity of man and safeguard his rights, whoever and wherever he is.

The peoples of this region have suffered a great deal from the woes of wars and paid the price from the blood of their sons and their resources. This obstructed many aspects of life. More than $200 billion were spent on armament in recent years, against $50 billion for food. In this context, the Palestinian Arab people — and the Iraqi people as well — have particularly suffered in the recent years. We are dutybound to help them and lift the injustice against them.

3. The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan has experienced many forms of terrorism, murder, and siege for decades, during which the best of our sons were martyred and our development plans were obstructed.

4. The peace process began between Israel and the Arab states around 20 years ago between the sister Egypt and Israel. This process expanded after the Palestinian-Israeli agreements signed by the Palestinian brothers through their legitimate leadership, the PLO, and after we in Jordan signed a peace agreement with Israel in 1994, and then the continuation of negotiations between Syria and Israel. These developments offer practical and clear evidence that the peoples of this region aspire for a just, comprehensive, and lasting peace. This decision embodies the will of those peoples to choose irreversible peace, which enables us to face all obstacles through a democratic option. This option shall remain one of our Jordanian constants and the components of our national character and a hallmark of our Arab, Islamic, and foreign policy.

Jordan shall remain true to its principles, eager to fight ethnic, religious, and sectarian trends. Jordan will do its best to fight poverty, fanaticism, backwardness, and ignorance, so that all of us would lead a free, dignified life that honors man and respects his rights.

Based on this, I call on our esteemed conference to display clear resolve and be a strong brick in the edifice of peace. The conference's declaration and steps should be a practical response to opposite forces and counter elements, whatever their identity and motives.

Your Majesty, Excellencies, Highnesses: I affirm that my country will be in the first confrontation line to protect the peace process and to safeguard man's gains, proceeding from what God says: O mankind! We created you from a single pair of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other not that ye may despair each other. Verily the most honored of you in the sight of God is he who is the most righteous of you. And God has full knowledge and is well acquainted with all things. [Koranic verse]

God's peace, mercy, and blessings be upon you.

Peacemakers Summit: Bahraini Heir Apparent Addresses Summit

NC1303124396 Cairo ESC Television in Arabic 1131 GMT 13 Mar 96

[Speech by Bahraini Heir Apparent Shaykh Hamad Bin-'Isa Al Khalifah at the summit in Sharm al-Shaykh—live]

[FBIS Translated Text] Your Excellency the President, Your Majesties, Your Excellencies. I will speak briefly. It pleases me to represent the state of Bahrain at this important international and regional conference which expresses the international community's backing for the peace process and its renunciation of all forms of violence and terrorism.

It also pleases me to praise the Arab Republic of Egypt's pioneering role represented by its hosting of the Middle East peacemakers conference for the sake of beginning a new era in this vital region.

Boosting the Middle East peace process is a necessary demand by all the region's nations and countries so that they can then devote their capabilities and resources to economic development and progress in an atmosphere of stability and respect for the principles of international, regional, and national law on all levels and in all spheres. To achieve this objective, it is necessary first of all to confront all the forms and radical causes of terrorist actions in all countries and not to allow the individuals linked in any way to such actions to act or achieve prominence under any slogan whatsoever.

In conclusion, we hope that this historic conference will mark a turning point in the region's history and be the start of a new age of cooperation, peace, and prosperity and a model for relations among this region's nations and countries.

Thank you, Mr. President.

Islamic Affairs

Political Islam Review: AL-SHA'B 5 Mar

NC1003200596

[FBIS Report] The following is a comprehensive review of all items in the 5 March edition of the Arabic language newspaper AL-SHA'B that pertain to political Islamic issues.

CONTENTS:

1. Factual Report Details Bombings in Israel
2. Committee Formed To Defend Prisoners of Conscience
3. Islamist Activists Arrested in al-'Arish
4. Iranian Parliamentary Elections Viewed
5. Press, Constitutional Court Come Under Government Attack
6. Writer Compares Nation to Powerless Airplane Hostages
7. Muslims Urged Not To Remain Silent Over Sudan's Siege
8. Central Asian Muslim Countries Targeted by Christians
9. Harassment of Islamist Students Continues
10. UN Human Rights Group Sponsors 8 Detained Lawyers
11. Al-Ghazali Urges Muslims To Go Back to Religion
12. Peres Advised to Learn Lessons of Begin, Sharon

FACTUAL REPORT DETAILS BOMBINGS IN ISRAEL

The main story on page 1 is a 700-word factual report written by Mahmud Bakri detailing the fifth suicidal Palestinian attack that "rocked Tel Aviv" on Monday 3 March and which followed the earlier attacks, two in Jerusalem and one in Ashqelon. The report details the Israeli leaders' reactions, their measures to counter the attacks, the blame they heaped on Yasir 'Arafat for not uprooting Hamas, the Islamic Resistance Movement, and Egypt's contacts with Israel and 'Arafat. The author also writes admiringly about the al-Fawwar refugee camp near Hebron from where "three of its sons carried out last week's three operations of martyrdom that killed more than 47 persons and injured more than 100 others, a large number of them military personnel. This is in addition to the fourth fedayeen operation in which a Palestinian citizen attacked an Israeli crowd, killing one and wounding dozens."

These attacks are also detailed in a 2,000-word report written by Jamal 'Arafah on page 3, noting that the last attack was in retaliation for Israel's rejection of the Hamas conditional offer to halt its attack.

COMMITTEE FORMED TO DEFEND PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE

A 570-word report by 'Amir 'Abd-al-Mun'im on pages 1 and 8 deals with what it calls the "vagueness" surrounding the ongoing talks to formulate the new media law to replace Law 93 for 1995. It says that the committee preparing the new law is keeping silent about its view on the issue of detention and imprisonment of journalists and notes that the Journalists Association will meet on Sunday, 10 March, to decide its final stand on the new law. The report also says that 50 public figures comprising writers, intellectuals, journalists, teachers, and jurists — all of them named at the end of the report — have announced the "formation of a committee to defend prisoners of conscience." The conferees, who met at the Nasirite Party headquarters on Sunday 3 March, set out their aims and the means of achieving them. The report adds: "The founders stressed that the committee aims to defend political detainees and political prisoners imprisoned because of their views and also to defend prisoners and people arrested for investigation by the public prosecution office in connection with cases of publication and dissemination of views. The committee will also work to improve the treatment of prisoners of conscience inside prison and to confront maltreatment." The committee decided to hold seminars and press conferences, issue statements, appoint lawyers, coordinate with human rights groups, prepare periodic reports on the conditions of prisoners of conscience, and take all legal measures to achieve the above objectives.

ISLAMIST ACTIVISTS ARRESTED IN AL-'ARISH

An unattributed 250-word report on pages 1 and 8 claims that the security forces recently arrested seven "prominent Islamist activists" in al-'Arish city. It says that the arrests were made after some citizens brought legal actions claiming torture by the State Security officers in northern Sinai. The report also notes that the 36 Islamists detained in al-Fayyum were remanded in prison for another 15 days pending completion of investigations. It says that the detainees entered the court bare footed and wearing the prison's torn uniforms because the prison management refused to allow in any clothes, foods, and medicines.

IRANIAN PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS VIEWED

A Tehran-datelined 400-word report by Qutb al-'Arabi on page 1 views the parliamentary elections to be held in Iran on Friday [8 March]. The factual report details the qualifications set for accepting candidates and the main forces fighting in the campaign, which he identifies as the "traditional right (the alliance of men of religion with the bazaar), the radical left, and the contemporary right or the liberals, known here as the supporters of President Hashemi-Rafsanjani." He also lists other minor forces fighting the elections which he claims "are the most important ones in Iran since the revolution because the elections come at a time when Iran is facing important internal and external challenges," which the writer does not specify. The writer follows this report with a more detailed one on page 8. In this second 1,800-word article, he analyses the various forces contesting the elections, particularly the battle between the traditional right and the liberals, and the tension between the president and the traditional right. He also notes that the government radio and television, though "officially proclaiming to be neutral on candidates in this battle, are showing a leaning toward the traditional right by giving prominence to the symbols of this trend from among the state officials who are not candidates and interviewing them." In conclusion, the writer voices the opinion that the question of whether "these elections will lead Iran toward more moderation and openness internally and externally or will only make it more inflexible" depends on the outcome of the elections.

PRESS, CONSTITUTIONAL COURT COME UNDER GOVERNMENT ATTACK

In his 5,000-word article on page 2, Chief Editor Majdi Ahmad Husayn concentrates his attack on what he calls the government's and ruling party's determination to demolish what remains of democracy in the country, accusing them of setting their sights on the "remaining citadels that continue to show resistance despite the fierce attacks on them in the past months and years: the press and the judiciary." As to the press, he refers to the government's insistence on keeping Law 93 for 1995 by talking about the need for the precautionary imprisonment of writers and thinkers despite the unconstitutionality of such actions. As to the judiciary, the writer accuses the government of inciting some of its writers to start a campaign against the Higher Constitutional Court on the pretext that "its rulings are causing legislative instability in the country." He adds: "Utterances that the Higher Constitutional Court has become a problem and that the court's practices now need to be reviewed have started." He then goes on to say that "it cannot be said that the Islamic trend is prevailing or having hegemony over the press or judiciary world. But the eroding authority, which has opted for the bullet and the club, cannot deal with civic society through ideas and views," noting here the absence of real dialogue about society's fundamental problems despite the large number of radio and television stations. He adds that "there is an undercurrent dialogue between the Islamic and secular camps. I believe that, despite all the difficulties, it has achieved progress and there is more common understanding of society's problems and of the motives of both camps' intellectuals. But the authority's role is to suffocate this dialogue," noting in this respect the exclusion of veteran journalist Muhammad Hasanayn Haykal from the Book Fair seminars and the recruitment of some secularists to fight the Islamic trend. Majdi Husayn then says that "the government's insistence on destroying the religious trend (basically the Islamic one) leads to the destruction of society's cells, thus destroying an important and principal part of society's structure. We note that the authority is turning a blind eye to the increasing Christian trend as long as it is confined within the church's walls and is not connected to society's political, economic, and social problems. The authority believes that the religious trend among Egypt's Copts does not threaten it. Since the rulers are only thinking of their power, then their worry, and their iron fist too, are chiefly directed toward the Islamic trend." He then claims that the rulers do not object to having a "tamed" [mujaffaf] Islamic presence seen or heard on the government's television and radio stations. After noting all the above, the writer takes Israel as an example of how religion and secularism managed to coexist and cohabit. A lengthy and detailed analyses of the religious and secular trends and parties in Israel, their cooperation and differences are then discussed, noting that there is a "general desire not to fragment the Zionist entity" despite all the differences and competition between the religious and secular forces. From this analysis, he concludes that "Israel is not an ideal society or an example to be followed. But it abides by some general conventions followed by all societies that have attained some measure of power and progress. Therefore, it has the right to prevail over us since we are content with our conditions. It is natural for a state of institutions to outdo us while we are destroying institutions. The fate of a 60 million populous nation depends on the whims of a limited number of persons or possibly one person. There is really a network of personal and corrupt interests that protects the regime, and a network of subservience that props and backs the regime for a time. The fact is that we are living in a lost time and every day that passes under this clique that is dismembering society is purely a lost day. We and the coming generations have to make strenuous efforts to repair the damage."

WRITER COMPARES NATION TO POWERLESS AIRPLANE HOSTAGES

In a 250-word column by Ahmad al-Suyufi that appears on page 6, the writer compares the nation's state to that of powerless hostages aboard an airliner hijacked by "western agents or Zionists." He says that the nation does not know whether it is with or against the Zionists, whether the Zionists or Iran or Sudan are the enemies, whether we are against the Americans or not, whether we are against privatization or not, and so on. The nation, he concludes, will remain suspended and endangered if it remains a nation of hostages "unless it takes the initiative and throws a stone at the hijackers."

MUSLIMS URGED NOT TO REMAIN SILENT OVER SUDAN'S SIEGE

A 800-word article by Dr. Sa'id Salamah Ibrahim on page 7 asserts that Egypt is the heart of Islam and Arabism and hence is the target of the enemies of Islam who began by imposing a siege on Libya, then seized Yemeni islands in the Red Sea, and are now preparing to besiege Sudan. The author casts doubt on the Ethiopian claims of Sudanese involvement in the attempt on President Mubarak's life last June, urging the government to announce that this is an issue between the two countries alone. He then appeals to Muslims not to remain silent until it is too late, since, in the writer's view, "a siege on Sudan is a siege on Egypt."

CENTRAL ASIAN MUSLIM COUNTRIES TARGETED BY CHRISTIANS

In an unsigned 500-word article in the "Development of Events" column on page 7, the unanimous writer claims that the pope's visit to four Latin American countries was really one of the battles raging between Catholics and Protestants, specially American ones. After giving some figures about the number of people converting to Protestanism, the writer says that Protestant missionaries are now focusing on the Islamic states of the former Soviet Union and urges "Islamic propagation and relief bodies to confront this church assault on its own ground."

HARASSMENT OF ISLAMIST STUDENTS CONTINUES

An unattributed 150-word report on page 8 says that the Hulwan University authorities are continuing their harassment of Islamist students and that a large number of students staged a hunger strike to protest an increase in fees and lowering of standards of service. The students also complained of the increase in the drug trade inside the university.

UN HUMAN RIGHTS GROUP SPONSORS 8 DETAINED LAWYERS

Another unattributed 100-word report on page 8 says that the UN human rights group in Geneva has adopted the cases of eight detained lawyers, claiming their detention to be arbitrary.

AL-GHAZALI URGES MUSLIMS TO GO BACK TO RELIGION

In his 150-word "This Is Our Religion" column on page 12, scholar Muhammad al-Ghazali relates how the Red Sea was an Islamic one until "Christian Eritrea" was established by the Jews to protect them and how even the Mediterranean Sea was Islamic rule under the Ottomans until its African coast was fragmented and made backward while its European coast represents the west's advance. He blames the Arabs for this, for rushing to establish ties with Israel, and, more importantly for "forgetting Islamic civilization and the Arabs' role in it and now wanting to live on Jewish-western financing." He urges Muslims to go back to their religion and respect human rights.

PERES ADVISED TO LEARN LESSONS OF BEGIN, SHARON

In his 2,000-word article on page 12, Dr. Mahjub 'Umar deals with the recent wave of suicidal Palestinian attacks in Israel and details how the killing of Palestinian Yahya 'Ayyash and Israeli bragging about it that followed it have led to these attacks, citing in this respect various statements by the Israeli prime minister and others. He says that Israel's demand for destruction of Hamas infrastructure and for uprooting it completely recalls Israel's invasion of Lebanon in 1982 and the atrocities that followed it. He adds that Peres wants now to do the same with the Palestinians in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. But, he says, "it is impossible to implement this now. If Shim'on Peres has not yet learned the lesson that made Menachem Begin withdraw in gloom before his death and removed Sharon, who dreamed of changing the Middle East and appointing its rulers, then he has to learn it. If his political education and expertise has not taught him the primary laws of politics, which say that violence breeds violence and that all forms of violence cannot be avoided unless justice is achieved, then he is deluded." He then warns that the region will continue to see major operations like the Jerusalem and Tel Aviv ones unless the Israelis become convinced that they do not live in fortified towers and that their security depends on the security and rights of others.

Political Islam Review: 'AQIDATI 5 Mar

NC1003153696

[FBIS Report] The following is a comprehensive review of all items in the 5 March edition of the Arabic language newspaper 'AQIDATI that pertain to political Islamic issues.

CONTENTS:

1. Surrogate Mothers Said Forbidden in Islam
2. Violence Against Copts Denounced.
3. Arabs Said Biggest Losers From Bombings.
4. Seminar Views Abortion, Circumcision, Organ Transplants.
5. Terrorism Said Alien To Islam.

SURROGATE MOTHERS SAID FORBIDDEN IN ISLAM

In a seminar organized by the International Islamic Center for Population Studies in Port Said, Islamic ulema and doctors have dismissed the notion of "womb leasing", or what is known surrogate mothers, as a solution for the problem of infertility. An approximately 1,200-word report by Rafiq Yasin on pages 1 and 14 notes that participants in the seminar stressed that Islam, which is keen on protecting the human community from the chaos of adultery, rejects this notion. According to the ulema, Islam is not against family planning. Islam believes that pregnancies should be spaced out to give mothers enough time to nurse and feed their babies, thus protecting the health of both mothers and infants.

According to Dr. Mustafa al-'Arjawi, dean of the College of Shari'ah in al-Azhar University, the use of "mechanical" contraceptives, such as condoms, diaphragms, and other chemical substances, is permitted under Islam. However, birth control sought by surgical methods such as hysterectomy and abortion are forbidden under Islamic shari'ah. Dr. Mustafa Husayn Hijab, professor of Gynecology in al-Mansurah University, dismissed orientalists' claims that Islam calls for polygamy, adding that Islam has come to regulate polygamy, something that preceded Islam. In addition, polygamy in Islam is one of the legitimate means for solving the problem of female infertility, thus sparing Muslims the "labyrinths" of such methods as artificial insemination and surrogate mothers, which are common in the world today and which were pronounced as religiously forbidden by the ulema, he added.

VIOLENCE AGAINST COPTS DENOUNCED

An approximately 500-word editorial on page 3 denounces the "regrettable" incidents that took place recently in Asyut and al-Sharqiyah Governorates recently, a reference to the murder of and acts of violence against Egyptian Copts. The editorial notes that these incidents are completely "alien" to the nature of the Egyptian people and run counter to all heavenly religions, which promote tolerance and love. The editorial urges Muslims and Christians to confront terrorism and terrorists, who seek to plunge Egypt in a "swamp" of internal strife, thus weakening its economic and social structure and preventing it from assuming its leading role. The editorial concludes by reiterating the need to provide the young with a proper religious upbringing that shields them from fanaticism and a wrong understanding of religion.

Majdi Salim, in an approximately 600-word column on page 10, notes that the events in Asyut and al-Sharqiyah once again arouse our concern about the "grave danger" of an outbreak of sectarian strive in Egypt, something that has never existed throughout Egypt's Islamic history. Salim notes that terrorism does not differentiate between Muslims and Christians. It only seeks to sow the "seeds of strife," thus causing panic and creating a suitable atmosphere for them to take over the country. Salim praises the security agencies for tracking down the remnants of terrorism and drying up external sources of finance. However, he notes that the performance of the media and ulema is not up to that standard. He points out that a simple quarrel between a guard and a priest in al-Sharqiyah village has triggered a chauvinist sense of tribalism, which was exploited by some people into a sectarian strife. As a result, houses of both Muslims and Christians were burned. Salim denounces attempts by some parties to rekindle the flames of sectarian strife by claiming that Copts in Egypt are being persecuted, with the obvious aim of turning everybody against Islam, as the alleged instigator of such persecution. Concluding, Salim points out that terrorism is targeting all Egyptians, whether Muslims or Christians, and that statistics show that the victims from terrorism include 42 Copts, but "hundreds" of Muslims.

ARABS SAID BIGGEST LOSERS FROM BOMBINGS

The Arabs and Palestinians are said to be the "biggest losers" from the Jerusalem bombings, writes Basyuni al-Halawani in an approximately 500-word column on page 6. He notes that although the Jews have committed the "ugliest" crimes against Palestinians for over a century that claimed the lives of thousands of Muslims and Arabs, we live in a different age today and it is not in the interest of Muslims now to be seen as spilling the blood of Jews. Particularly after the whole world realized following Rabin's assassination that "Jewish extremism" is far more dangerous than the so-called "Islamic extremism." Al-Halawani notes that peace has given the Palestinians "some hope" and has earned them the "sympathy" of most world countries, who were previously tricked by Israel's allegations. While urging Hamas to stop its military operations against "Jewish civilians," al-Halawani calls on Israel first to stop its aggressive measures against the Palestinians, which are responsible for sparking the retaliatory operations.

SEMINAR VIEWS ABORTION, CIRCUMCISION, ORGAN TRANSPLANTS

Doctors participating in a seminar on "Medicine and Ethics," on the sideline of the Cairo Book Fair, have passed decisive verdicts on a number of "thorny" and controversial issues that have been at the center of a dispute between ulema and doctors, writes Ibrahim Nasr in an approximately 2,500-word report on pages 8 and 9. The issues are abortion, female circumcision, and organ transplants. According to Dr. Munir Fawzi, professor of Gynecology at 'Ayn Shams University, abortion involving an "inseminated egg" is tantamount to murder, unless it is recommended by a trustworthy doctor and meant to protect the mother's life or for fear of producing a disfigured baby. In such cases, abortion would be religiously and medically sanctioned, he added.

Regarding female circumcision, Dr. Fawzi expressed surprise at the West's interest in this issue, although it is not practiced in their countries. He added that a custom recommended by Prophet Muhammad must not be combated just because of some "erroneous practices." Instead, it must be performed correctly by specialized people, he added, citing a number of sayings by Prophet Muhammad calling for female circumcision, contrary to claims that there are no such sayings. Dr. Fawzi pointed out that not all females must be circumcised, adding that circumcision, which is nothing more than a "simple plastic surgery" is performed only when necessary.

Touching on the question of organ transplants, Dr. Ahmad al-Shawarbi, assistant professor at 'Ayn Shams University, pointed out that removing an organ from a healthy person deprives this person of a "normal life," that doctors deliberately conceal the dangers involved in organ donation because they "benefit" financially from such surgeries. Dr. Safwat Lutfi of the Cairo University School of Medicine dismissed as fictitious the notion of transplanting organs from dead persons. He noted that this term was coined to justify transplanting organs from people who are alive but are in a "deep coma," adding that organs in such cases go to the "highest bidder," something that is against both religion and ethics. He added that people who are in a coma are alive and cannot be pronounced dead until they are dead.

TERRORISM SAID ALIEN TO ISLAM

Jamal Salim writes an approximately 3,500-word report on pages 12 and 13 on a seminar entitled "Terrorism and Extremism Locally and Internationally," held on the sideline of the Cairo Book Fair. Representatives of political parties, intellectuals, and journalists took part in the seminar. The participants stressed that terrorism is alien to Islam and that terrorist crimes are being conducted by impostors who are hungry for power.

National Progressive Unionist Grouping Secretary General Rif'at al-Sa'id noted that it is wrong to refer to terrorists as "Islamic groups," because they have nothing to do with Islam. Al-Sa'id accused the Muslim Brotherhood of starting the phenomenon of "Islamized terrorism." He called for remedying the shortcomings of cultural, educational, religious, and other agencies to protect the youths from falling prey to terrorism and extremist ideas.

For his part, writer Muhammad Salmawi differentiated between fanaticism and terrorism. He said fanaticism is not a problem, so long as it does not turn into crime or terrorism, adding that intellectual fanaticism can be handled by dialogue whereas terrorism can be uprooted only if its causes are remedied.

'AQIDATI Chief Editor al-Sayyid 'Abd-al-Ra'uf refuted claims by the seminar coordinator Dr Ghali Shukri, who accused 'AQIDATI of feeding extremism by its harsh attacks on secularists and communists. He noted that confronting terrorism is the duty of all people, because they are all in the same boat. He added that it is wrong for some to imagine that confronting religious extremism can be done by adopting an extremist stance against religion. Responding to accusations against 'AQIDATI, by both secularists and extremists alike, 'Abd-al-Ra'uf said: "We do not call for terrorism or extremism, but for a rational dialogue. We do not carry guns or daggers, but a call to God through wisdom, good counseling, and reasoning."

Palestinian Affairs

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Leaves for Sharm al-Shaykh Summit

JN1203135296 Gaza Palestinian Broadcasting Corporation Television Network in Arabic 1300 GMT 12 Mar 96

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat left the homeland for Egypt a short while to take part in the peacemakers conference, which is scheduled to be held in Sharm al-Shaykh tomorrow, Wednesday [13 March].

Palestinian Affairs: Officials Preview 'Arafat's Summit Speech, Positions

JN1203150696 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1400 GMT 12 Mar 96

[Report by 'Adil al-Za'nun in Gaza]

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat left for Sharm al-Shaykh Egypt this afternoon. He is leading a senior Palestinian delegation. Before leaving the homeland, President 'Arafat expressed hope that the peacemakers summit, scheduled to be held in Sharm al-Shaykh tomorrow, will be fruitful.

Nabil Abu-Rudaynah, adviser to President 'Arafat, said that 'Arafat will demand that the Israeli Government lift the military siege imposed on the Palestinian territories and stop the policy of collective punishment against the Palestinian people. In his speech to the conference, President 'Arafat will emphasize Palestinian commitment to the peace process.

Abu-Rudaynah pointed out that in his speech, the president will also stress the need to accurately and honestly implement the Palestinian-Israeli agreement. He will also call on the regional and international forces to cooperate in confronting violence and terrorism to protect the peace process.

For his part, Marwan Kanafani, member of the Legislative Council, said that the Israeli side is fighting the National Authority and the Palestinian people at a time when the National Authority is fighting against violence. He criticized these Israeli practices, particularly the current military siege.

Kanafani added that President 'Arafat will bring to the Sharm al-Shaykh conference specific and clear answers to the problems facing the peace process.

Palestinian Affairs: Palestinians To Raise Issue of Economic Hardship at Summit

MM1203162896 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 12 Mar 96 p 4

[Report by Husayn Hijazi: "Al-Nashashibi Tells AL-HAYAH: We Will Raise Question of Lifting Israeli Siege at Sharm al-Shaykh"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Gaza — Muhammad Zuhdi al-Nashashibi, finance minister in the Palestinian Authority [PA], has told AL-HAYAH that the Palestinian side will raise with the world leaders participating in the Sharm al-Shaykh summit tomorrow the dimensions of the political and economic difficulties the Palestinians are suffering as a result of the measures taken by Israel in the wake of the suicide operations.

He added: "We will urge the conference to take the necessary urgent measures to lift the siege imposed on the areas controlled by the PA. We will urge the international community to affirm the Palestinian people's right to build their national economy by breaking the shackles imposed on this economy by Israel, so as to secure our right to exercise free trade with the world. We will also urge the donor states to speed up implementation of the infrastructure projects endorsed at the Paris Club meetings in October and January, which are expected to take a year to implement."

Al-Nashashibi added that the Palestinian memorandum will raise at the summit the problems resulting from denying 100,000 Palestinian workers their livelihood and request that urgent aid be provided to the PA to enable it to absorb this large number of workers, who are now unemployed. He said that Israel is preventing the Palestinians from importing flour, rice, oil, and other essential supplies, even though a contract was signed a few days ago to import these commodities from Egypt.

He added that the Palestinian side will present a political memorandum to the conference explaining the measures and steps it deems necessary and urgent to reactivate the peace process and extricate it from the current crisis. He said that the first of these measures is to urge Israel to honor the agreements signed with it and to begin the final status negotiations. He expressed his optimism about the summit's ability to secure the necessary atmosphere to take measures capable of containing this crisis and extricating the peace process from the situation it is going through, which he described as a "bottleneck." [passage omitted]

Palestinian Affairs: AL-QUDS Urges Summit To Address Palestinian Security

TA1203193196 Jerusalem AL-QUDS in Arabic 11 Mar 96 p 11

[Editorial: "The International Summit and Palestinian Security"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Two days before the international summit in Sharm al-Shaykh and amid the accelerating preparations for its convocation, statements by leaders and officials who will participate in this summit have increased. Those statements deal either with the topics on the summit's agenda, which is set for one day, or with the different names that the summit will be called, such as "the antiterrorism summit," "the peacemakers summit," "the peace-saving summit," or "the summit for combating radical Islamic fundamentalism," and so forth. Each of these names suits the party that uttered it and what it aims to achieve at the summit.

Amid all this, the question that every Palestinian is asking is: What place does Palestinian security occupy in this summit, especially since it is being convened in the aftermath of the recent suicide operations to which Israel was subjected? And how come this summit is being held under all these slogans and amid this international solidarity with Israel, while the entire Palestinian population in the West Bank and Gaza Strip is enduring the harshest forms of suffering by virtue of the collective punishment imposed by Israel and its clear policy of suffocation, and while Israel itself is participating in this summit with slogans that call for combating terrorism and saving the peace?

How can peace be saved while the Palestinian people, the principal partners and owners of the central issue in the Arab-Israeli conflict, have remained victims and sustained the most damage, and whose security is still being threatened in terms of a contemporary security concept?

What has been practiced against our people for several days — from denying the most elementary rights to violating the different charters, norms, and agreements — is a stain of shame on the forehead of all those who are raising the slogans of human rights, international legitimacy, and terrorism and who at the same time remain silent toward the suffering of our people, especially children, women, and the elderly in villages, towns, and refugee camps.

If the Sharm al-Shaykh summit aims to delve into all the slogans that have been raised, it behooves the summit to address not only the manifestations of violence and tension but also the causes and roots of this tension, foremost of all the deprivation of our people of their legitimate rights and the continued threats to their national security by the continued occupation of large parts of their territories.

If all the Western experts agree that so-called "terrorism" is not isolated from the political, economic, and social environment, then all those interested in removing the elements of violence and tension should heed the suffering of the Palestinian people in its political, economic, and social aspects. They should also pay attention to the famine threatening the Palestinian people's children and the death hovering over their sick people as a result of the stifling siege and the Israeli insistence on disregarding the Palestinian people's legitimate national rights and imposing a fait accompli policy — from settlement activity and confiscations to isolation and so forth.

In short, if the international summit is to promote the peace process, first of all attention should be paid to the main victim in the conflict, the Palestinian people. Then, the essential ingredients should be created to advance the peace process on the basis of acknowledging the injustice and oppression inflicted on the Palestinian people. Consequently, the chances of the success of this summit will be enhanced because its results will be close to reality, which is definitely different from imposing measures and restrictions that have nothing in common with the peace process and the real interests of the region's people.

Palestinian Affairs: APF Statement Warns 'Arafat, Condemns Summit

JN1203220096 (Clandestine) Al-Quds Palestinian Arab Radio in Arabic 1730 GMT 12 Mar 96

[Political statement issued by the APF, in Beirut; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. The Alliance of Palestinian Forces [APF] has reviewed the latest developments on the Palestinian arena, most prominent among which is the martyrdom-seeking operations carried out by a squad of mujahidin from the Hamas [Islamic Resistance] and Islamic Jihad Movements against the occupation forces and a herd of Zionist settlers in Jerusalem, Ashqelon, and Tel Aviv. The APF expresses its strong support for the Hamas and Islamic Jihad Movements.

In this context, the APF asserts that it will not allow the Zionist enemy or 'Arafat and his authority to deal with any of the APF factions one after the other, and views these jihad operations as a legitimate right of the Palestinian people who are struggling for the restoration of their legitimate and just rights, which are guaranteed by all religions and international charters and norms.

The APF believes the arrests launched by 'Arafat and his team against hundreds of the mujahidin and strugglers of our people is no more than a service for the occupation authorities and in response to the orders of the Zionist enemy and the U.S. Administration to declare a state of war against the Palestinian people, their cause, and all the mujahidin and strugglers in our Arab and Islamic nation, and to arrest members of the military wing of the 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam battalions and hand them over to Israel.

In undertaking this cowardly action, 'Arafat has turned himself into a obedient tool of the Zionist enemy. Therefore, the APF holds 'Arafat and his team fully responsible for any sedition that may arise leading our people to a civil war, and warns him against taking any more arbitrary measures against our people who are struggling against and resisting the Zionist enemy and who reject all the Israeli and imperialist hegemony schemes.

The APF also calls on all Arab and Palestinian states to define their position on 'Arafat and his team who are subjugating our Palestinian people. It has transpired that this zionized team has become a cheap tool in the hands of the Zionist occupation authorities and U.S. intelligence.

Amid our people and nation's support for the martyrdom-seeking operations that have crushed the heart of the Zionist entity and its allies, the evil powers of the world, led by the United States of America, are calling for the convocation of an international conference in Sharm al-Shaykh under the pretext of combating terrorism.

Within this context, the APF asserts to the whole world that the terrorists are occupying the land of Palestine, killing its people, rendering millions of them homeless, and desecrating its holy places.

The terrorists are also committing massacres against the sons of our people and nation in Palestine, the Golan, and southern Lebanon. Since its illegitimate establishment on the land of Palestine, the Zionist entity has been committing massacres, beginning with Dayr Yasin and Kafr Qasim and ending with the massacres in the holy al-Aqsa and Ibrahimi mosques.

Those who are defending their homeland, holy places, and rights are offering themselves as oblations for Palestine at the altars of freedom and jihad. This is their legitimate right which has been recognized by our tolerant religion since the era of Prophet Muhammad, may God's peace be upon him, and until now. The one who says otherwise either does not understand anything about Islam or is colluding with the enemy. Islam has nothing to do with this.

In view of this, the APF condemns and denounces the conspiracy being concocted against our people and nation in Sharm al-Shaykh. The APF also condemns the Arab and Islamic regimes which are colluding with the U.S. and Zionist demands.

Moreover, the APF expresses its astonishment at the European position which is in complete harmony with the U.S. and Zionist positions. The APF believes that the collapse of the forces of evil and injustice in the world with this speed came as a result of the collapse of the imperialist-Zionist project. The Israeli presence has been threatened after the Oslo agreements, and their makers have gone with the wind. Furthermore, the regimes in Egypt and Jordan, which are linked to the imperialist project, have been in a state of imbalance and instability.

The APF wonders: Why did all these evil forces remain idle when our people and nation were subjected to successive massacres? Is this move not a great proof of the absolute U.S. bias toward Israel at the expense of our rights and those of our nation?

On the other hand, the APF highly appreciates the role of the Arab and Islamic states which rejected and boycotted the summit of organized international terrorism in Sharm al-Shaykh.

The APF also appeals to all forces, figures, and humanitarian and free institutions in the world to stand with our people against the forces of injustice and evil in the world to regain their just and legitimate rights.

[Signed] The APF, Beirut

Palestinian Affairs: PLO Official Urges Israelis To Back Peres

TA1203202196 Jerusalem AL-MANAR in Arabic 11 Mar 96 p 16

[Interview with Muhammad Subayh, permanent Palestinian envoy to the Arab League and secretary of the Palestine National Council, by 'Ali Khamis in Cairo; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Khamis] What is your interpretation of the recent acts of violence in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, and Ashqelon?

[Subayh] The Palestinian street has expressed its rejection of these acts, because they have an adverse effect on the peace process. Israel facilitated these operations indirectly. It is common knowledge that Israel killed three Palestinians inside the Palestinian Authority's [PA] territories. They are 'Ayyash, Kamal Mujid, and Ahmad 'Adil. It killed the fourth in Malta while the PA was holding a dialogue with Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] and agreement was reached not to embarrass the PA at present and not to carry out any acts in the areas that the PA took over.

Furthermore, procrastination in handing over the rest of the Palestinian areas, such as Hebron; the fact that no passage was built between Gaza and Jericho; the daily confiscation of lands whether for settlements or for bypass roads; stating that Jerusalem is not subject to negotiations; and refraining from releasing the prisoners — all these issues provoked and continue to provoke the Palestinian people.

[Khamis] What is the practical solution for containing the escalating manifestation of violence in the occupied territories?

[Subayh] The solution is to speed up the peace process, and not to slow it down. Any operations by the Israeli side to undermine the PA will increase tension. The Israeli street and peace forces should united behind Prime Minister Shim'on Peres in these circumstances, because the pressure on him by Israeli right-wing elements, such as Sharon, Eytan, Netanyahu, and others is very strong.

Everyone, especially the United States and all peace-loving countries, is required to promote the peace efforts in the Middle East, playing the kind of role that Egypt is playing at present.

[Khamis] Are there fears that the peace process will be halted?

[Subayh] Yes, there are fears. The peace process might be halted if the Israeli side behaves in an unacceptable manner. The Israeli right wing is talking about invading Gaza and operating inside the Palestinian territories. This obstructs the peace process enormously. The biggest mistake that the Israelis are committing is giving the Israeli security forces a free hand to act inside the self-rule areas to pursue the perpetrators of the acts of violence.

[Khamis] Is the PA unable to maintain security in the self-rule areas as the Israeli side is suggesting?

[Subayh] On the contrary, all these operations were carried out and planned outside the PA areas. It is the Israeli side that has demonstrated a security impotence, not the Palestinian side. Searching for a scapegoat or a pretext is a big mistake and does not remedy the problem as much as it complicates it.

Holding the PA responsible for these incidents is a completely wrong concept. They are aware that the PA managed to expand and consolidate its control and preserve security and stability completely in the areas that it took over.

Israel is required to leave all the Palestinian areas so that security and stability will prevail.

[Khamis] President Yasir 'Arafat has alluded to the involvement of foreign quarters in the recent acts of violence. In your assessment, what are the foreign movements that could possibly be involved?

[Subayh] Naturally there are foreign influences and movements; this is clear. There is an organization in Israel called "the secret organization," which was in the French Army when Algeria was under occupation. Those who killed the Israeli prime minister might do anything, and there is a likelihood that they provided facilities for implementing the recent operations.

[Khamis] Will the security siege that Israel has imposed on the Palestinian territories in the wake of the recent operations reduce acts of violence?

[Subayh] This collective punishment will only deteriorate the situation. It proves the impotence of Israeli actions. The issue of collective punishment is very grave and will stall the peace process further. At present, the primary goal of the Israeli leadership is to embarrass the PA, close the borders, and try to starve the Palestinian people.

[Khamis] Some circles have said that Israel might resort to the UN Security Council to submit a complaint about the recent incidents. What will be the outcome?

[Subayh] What will the Security Council do about such incidents? The issue must be addressed on the Israeli level by speeding up the peace process, not by any other solution.

[Khamis] What is your opinion on the separation plan between the Palestinians and the Israelis that is being prepared by the Israeli authorities?

[Subayh] All these things that harm the Palestinian people, encircle them, and place them in a large prison are completely rejected. These things have no relation whatsoever with peace.

[Khamis] What about the large-scale arrests by the PA of Hamas elements?

[Subayh] This does not indicate condemnation. They are being interrogated because Israel is claiming unjustly that they were aided. The Hamas organization in Gaza announced that it had no connection with these incidents. These people are being interrogated — purely an interrogation, no more no less. Anyone who proves that he is not related to these matters will be released.

Palestinian Affairs: New Body To Lead Final Stage Talks With Israel

TA1203151396 Jerusalem AL-MANAR in Arabic 11 Mar 96 p 2

[FBIS Translated Text] AL-MANAR has learned that the Palestinian leadership is currently considering a new makeup for the negotiating body with Israel. Sources said that this body will be in charge of leading the final solution talks. The body, whose formation will be announced soon, will include Mahmud 'Abbas, alias Abu-Mazin, Hani al-Hasan, Hasan 'Asfur, Nabil 'Amr, Nabil Sha'th, and Hanan 'Ashrawi.

Palestinian Affairs: Palestinian Forces To Confront Reoccupation Attempts

JN1203153696 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1400 GMT 12 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Marwan al-Barghuthi, member of the Legislative Council and secretary of the Fatah Movement in the West Bank, said that the Palestinian side will not allow Israeli forces to reoccupy the liberated cities, and that the Palestinian forces will firmly confront any Israeli military attempt to enter into the liberated cities on security pretexts.

In a statement to the Voice of Palestine, al-Barghuthi stressed that the Palestinian side is committed to the Oslo agreement and to the peace process. At the same time, it is impermissible to reoccupy any of the liberated lands, he added.

Palestinian Affairs: Security Source Criticizes Israel Ordering Gazans To Return

JN1203203296 Gaza Palestinian Broadcasting Corporation Television Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 12 Mar 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] A Palestinian security spokesman stated the following: No one has the right to issue military orders deporting any Palestinian student from the Palestinian cities and villages in the West Bank as this is the prerogative only of the Palestinian National Authority.

Palestinian Affairs: Hamas Official on Attacks, PA Measures, Peace

NC1103164396 Beirut AL-NAHAR in Arabic 9 Mar 96 p 7

[Interview with Mustafa al-Liddawi, Hamas representative in Beirut, by Radwan 'Uqayl; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] ['Uqayl] Why did the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, carry out such powerful suicide operations at this time? The four attacks put the peace process to a difficult test.

[Al-Liddawi] First, we are not concerned with the peace process. Hamas, the opposition factions, and the majority of the Palestinian people oppose this process in its current form. This process ignores all the sacrifices of the Palestinian people, relinquishes all inalienable Palestinian rights for which we have long struggled, and perpetuates the existence of the Zionist enemy on our land and soil.

The recent military operations were carried out naturally in this context. They are a continuation of the jihad and the martyrdom-seeking action irrespective of the obstacles we faced in the past. We are not dropping armed action from our options, but we were eager not to shed Palestinian blood and not to fan the flames of a civil war among the Palestinians in the self-rule areas. We, consequently, wanted to avoid problems with the Palestinian Authority [PA], which certainly represents a group of our people. We also avoided carrying out military operations in the self-rule areas because the PA claims that such operations embarrass it in front of the enemy. We held meetings with the PA in Cairo and committed ourselves not to carry out any military action during the recent elections.

Military and martyrdom action is a natural thing in our strategy and plan to liberate our land. I repeat that the peace process, the Israeli concept of it, does not concern us. The proposed peace seeks to impose hegemony over a weak, surrendered party. Perhaps Hamas would understand the peace process, but the current settlement conflicts with the most basic idea of justice.

['Uqayl] What is your comment on the pro-'Arafat demonstrations in the self-rule areas in the past few days? The demonstrators condemned the acts of violence against the Israelis.

[Al-Liddawi] We do not deny that some of the Palestinian people support the peace process, but the marches of the past few days by no means reflect the mood of our people. People were forced to join the demonstrations; the PA forced public and private school children to take part. Those who watched the demonstrations saw columns of school children marching in the streets of Gaza and the self-rule areas. This proves that the marches were not a spontaneous expression of our people's sentiments as much as they were something imposed on the Palestinian people, especially students.

['Uqayl] There is now Israeli-Palestinian coordination in the self-rule areas to destroy Hamas' infrastructure. What are your options in light of these restrictions on your movement?

[Al-Liddawi] The Israeli-Palestinian coordination is nothing new, especially as regards security. This was a basic point in the Oslo agreement. It is known that a large number of Palestinian security officials were allowed into the self-rule areas only after they promised the Israelis to give all the information they had about previous Palestinian activities. They also promised to help the Israeli security agencies by providing information about all elements of the intifadah, whether Hamas' or other organizations' members.

Hamas, like all the Palestinian factions that oppose the Oslo agreement, found that the losses it suffered during the self-rule; namely, the loss of fighters, was greater than the losses it suffered during the Israeli occupation of Gaza.

['Uqayl] Did the Palestinian police play a role in helping the Israelis inflict these losses on you?

[Al-Liddawi] The enemy would not have been able to reach any of our fighters, especially in the West Bank, without the help of the PA.

['Uqayl] Has Israeli intelligence been able to infiltrate the Palestinian police?

[Al-Liddawi] The word infiltrate is an understatement. There is an Israeli security official for every Palestinian security official, the first issues the orders and instructions to the second and draws up his working plan. The losses inflicted on the Hamas movement recently would not have happened if it were not for the information the self-rule authority provided to the Israeli agencies. This particularly applies to the assassination of Kamal Kahil and Yahya 'Ayyash, which were carried out by the Israelis based on the PA's information and monitoring operations.

['Uqayl] Under these tight restrictions, what are your choices?

[Al-Liddawi] No matter how tight the restrictions are on Hamas and the opposition, they are not as tight as they were during the intifadah. We do not expect any loosening up during our jihad and struggle march. We know that more restrictions will be imposed on our movement and the opposition as time passes.

['Uqayl] What is the truth behind the announcement by the 'Izz- al-Din al-Qassam Battalions about handing over weapons and engaging in negotiations with the Israelis; and, what is the reason for such a development?

[Al-Liddawi] This is absolutely not true; Hamas does not want to hand over its weapons and the 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam Battalions have not issued a statement in this context. It was the PA that distributed and promoted the statements. The movement maintains its position of refusing to hand over weapons. It is continuing the struggle to realize its goals.

['Uqayl] Where does your movement get financial support; and, what is your response to the statement by Robert Briant, head of the national security department at the FBI, that "Hamas is getting American financial support?"

[Al-Liddawi] Throughout its march, Hamas never received any government support. All the assistance it is getting is popular support from the Islamic and Arab world. They pay us money to respond to the call of God.

['Uqayl] Even from America?

[Al-Liddawi] From Muslims everywhere, be they in America or anywhere else, Arabs regard Palestine as their central issue. The popular support we receive is not influenced by the American or Western threats that seek to dry up these sources of finance.

['Uqayl] We always hear about the separation between the political and military leaderships within Hamas. How true is this?

[Al-Liddawi] It is logical to separate the political from the military leadership. This does not mean that there are differences between the two leaderships. Under the harsh security circumstances in which we live under the Israeli occupation and the PA collaboration with the enemy, the military cannot appear in public. They work underground. The political activist can perform his tasks in a different manner. The two leaderships are not isolated from each other. After all, they both belong to the same movement and there is clear coordination between the two. There is also a clear responsiveness to the line pursued by the political and military leaderships.

['Uqayl] Do you not fear a stricter seige on the Palestinians if Likud candidate Binyamin Netanyahu assumes power?

[Al-Liddawi] With the present developments, Hamas does not care whether the Likud or Labor Party wins; they are two sides of the same coin.

['Uqayl] What is your comment on the American call for a Middle East summit in Cairo to be attended by U.S. President Bill Clinton?

[Al-Liddawi] It is possible to assume that the Western-Israeli summit to fight what they term terrorism and violence in the Middle East is as good as already held as far as goals and plans are concerned. What is happening now is an attempt to confirm these plans more in Cairo. America and the Western states set out lately to force the Middle East states to reject and denounce martyrdom operations. In terms of context, the slated summit is not much different from the well-known American policy.

['Uqayl] Do you expect the summit to issue resolutions against you?

[Al-Liddawi] Many resolutions have been issued against us.

['Uqayl] There has been an international denunciation of your suicidal operations. Even the Iranian UN mission has denounced all acts of violence that target innocent people regardless of the victims' nationalities and the perpetrators' nationalities and beliefs?

[Al-Liddawi] We look with amazement at the West's contradictory and biased concept. We did not do anything new in our recent operations. Our jihad to liberate the land has international legitimacy. International law does not ban our operations. But we are observing a major international assault on Hamas, which is exercising its legitimate right. The question is: Why is there this deep silence about Israel, which assassinated Dr. Fathi al-Shaqaqi in Malta, and why is Israel's sovereignty and dignity so well-protected? Why did the world remain silent when Yahya 'Ayyash was killed? Why don't they object to Israel, which is testing its destructive weapons in south Lebanon?

['Uqayl] But how do you explain the denunciation by the Iranian UN mission?

[Al-Liddawi] Really, I have not heard that Iran has denounced our operations but the killing of innocent people in Lebanon and Palestine.

['Uqayl] Does your movement form the nucleus of the "Islamic Palestinian Revolutionary Army" which recently attacked an Israeli vehicle in the Margaliyyot settlement?

[Al-Liddawi] Hamas has no links with this army.

['Uqayl] Who does this army follow then?

[Al-Liddawi] I do not know.

['Uqayl] Do you expect Hamas and Islamic Jihad members to be deported to Lebanese territories as happened in the Marj al-Zuhur case?

[Al-Liddawi] We do not rule out the fiercest acts of violence by the enemy against the opposition parties. Israel might resort to deportation.

['Uqayl] How many members do you have in Lebanon and how easy is it for them to move?

[Al-Liddawi] We have only a symbolic political presence outside Palestine through the movement's representative or its spokesman. Our movement does not have any establishments outside Palestine.

['Uqayl] Do you have a presence in the Palestinian camps in Lebanon?

[Al-Liddawi] Through its operations, Hamas is undoubtedly growing in the hearts of many, including the Lebanese. Therefore, we are not responsible for the feelings of the people who see that Hamas is fulfilling their hopes.

['Uqayl] It is said that you have training camps in al-Biqa'.

[Al-Liddawi] These claims are not true.

['Uqayl] Some are surprised by your presence in Lebanon. The "Rally for the Republic" has accused you of seeking to make Lebanon a target for Israeli revenge operations.

[Al-Liddawi] Hamas is most concerned about Lebanon's sovereignty and security. Our movement has no intention of harming this state, which has embraced the Palestinian cause for a long time. Hamas has no interest other than in the land of Palestine.

['Uqayl] Lebanon might come under pressure to close the Hamas office there and to expel its representative. What will your stand be if this happens?

[Al-Liddawi] I hope that neither Lebanon nor the other Arab countries will yield to the Zionist and U.S.

Administrations. But, God forbid, if the Lebanese state asks us to close our offices, then we will not hesitate to do so.

['Uqayl] If this does happen, will you ask Hizballah and the other Islamic movements in Lebanon to support you against the state?

[Al-Liddawi] We believe that the Lebanese people support us because Hamas is a vanguard movement of jihad.

Palestinian Affairs: Hamas Spokesman Interviewed on Bombings, Summit

JN1203115696 Amman AL-SABIL in Arabic 12-18 Mar 96 p 6

[Interview with Ibrahim Ghawshah, official spokesman of Hamas, by 'Atif al-Julani; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [al-Julani] In the wake of the recent armed operations, the Israeli authorities have taken broad suppressive measures against the Palestinian people and declared an all-out war on Hamas [Islamic Resistance] Movement. How do you view these suppressive measures?

[Ghawshah] When Peres declared war on Hamas, he practically declared war on Islam and Islamic movements everywhere. The president of the Zionist entity's state characterized the recent martyrdom operations as a war against the Zionist state. Perhaps, this is the closest characterization of the strategic nature of the Hamas Movement's resistance to Zionist occupation. The president of the Zionist state further revealed his spite against Palestinian strugglers when he said that they represent a needle in a haystack. He added that in order to find this needle, he is willing to burn the whole haystack.

This is the zenith of terrorism, and this is exactly what Peres started to do. Peres imposed a total land and sea blockade on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. He also deployed tanks along the Green Line and stormed Zone B. Under the Oslo accord, this zone includes 465 villages. He began with al-Fawwar Camp in Hebron, where he imposed a curfew and stringent blockade. He also ordered a special committee, led by the head of the Shabak, to carry out a fierce arrest campaign. Peres also sought the help of Oriental Jews, who arrested some strugglers of the Hamas Movement, specified 13 homes to be demolished, and began to demolish the house that was rented by the family of martyr Ra'id Sharnubi in the village of Burqa in the Nabulus District, along with two other houses. Afterward, the Zionist authorities launched a suppressive campaign against charity, educational, health, and other Islamic organizations. Six institutions were closed in Jerusalem alone.

As for the arrests, the occupation authorities have so far not announced a final figure. The arrests are continuing. Ehud Baraq, foreign minister of the Zionist enemy, threatened Yasir 'Arafat, chairman of the Palestinian Authority [PA], that the Israeli army may soon storm Zone A, which includes Palestinian cities and the Gaza Strip. There is also information about plans to deport relatives of strugglers to Lebanon and some African states.

In brief, the recent operations of the al-Qassam Battalions shook the pillars of the Zionist entity's state and returned things to square one, which is debating the Zionists' right to usurp Palestinian land and stay there.

[Al-Julani] Israel's suppressive measures were accompanied by parallel PA measures against members of the Hamas Movement and its institutions. How do you view this?

[Ghawshah] We should understand that the PA's job, according to the Oslo agreements, is summed up in two main points: First, relinquishing the Palestinian people's right to their territory. Second, providing security to the Zionist entity. For this purpose, the accords state that a "strong" police force should be formed. The force now includes more than 30,000 members, whose job is to ensure Zionist security. Based on this, Zionist suppression campaigns were accompanied by PA suppression campaigns. Israeli Security Minister Shahal said coordination with the PA is good. Peres and Baraq, however, are still pushing for more coordination. Indeed, the PA's security agencies conducted a large-scale arrest campaign. These agencies arrested hundreds of people. The PA chairman recently told the media that more than 250 people were arrested within 24 hours. The correct number, however, is much greater.

The chief of Palestinian police in Gaza said the campaign had just started. To imagine the magnitude of the campaign, we should know that 1,000 policemen were sent only to al-Shuja'iyah quarter to comb it and break into homes there. The PA also took over mosques run by the Islamic movement, as well as all Islamic institutions, including charity organizations, schools, clinics, orphanages, nurseries, and Koran recitation centers. The police also broke into Shaykh Ahmad Yasin's office in Sabra, despite the PA chairman's repeated claims that he seeks his release. The peak of these actions was breaking into the Islamic University in a barbaric way.

[Al-Julani] The PA showed pictures of weapons, munition, and explosive belts which it said were found during the storm and arrest campaign. Is there any truth in this?

[Ghawshah] This was a farce used by the Authority. It is easy for the Authority to bring such material from its warehouses and show it to the media to deceive public opinion.

[Al-Julani] Some people believe that there is a great contradiction between the PA's criticism of the Israeli punitive measures against the Palestinian people and its practicing of these measures in the areas under its control. What is your comment on this?

[Ghawshah] We can describe the Authority's behavior as hypocrisy and complicity at the same time. This means that the PA is in full complicity with the Zionist occupation authorities on the joint repressive campaign. At the same time, it asks its media organs to claim to be calling for an end to the siege and the Zionist repression while this authority carries out the same measures. We also noted that the Authority denounced the decision to close Orient House, which is something that we also denounce, but it remained silent when six Islamic establishments were closed in Jerusalem. Complicity peaked when a meeting was held between the Zionist, U.S., and Palestinian intelligence organs to exchange information and coordinate on the Hamas Movement.

[Al-Julani] A number of PA figures made statements concerning coordination between the Hamas Movement and the Israeli right to topple the Labor Party in the next Israeli elections. How true is the talk about such coordination? Do you really seek to topple the Labor Party?

[Ghawshah] This charge is baseless. The Hamas Movement considers the Labor Party and the Likud as two faces of the same coin. The two parties carry out repressive actions against the Palestinian people and they have close political positions on the Palestine question. The PA officials claimed that Hamas receives hexogene [as published] from Israel provided by rightist Israeli elements. However, a Zionist explosives expert said the bombs used by the mujahidin are mines that are received from abroad after being dismantled, and that the hyxogene story is a mere lie. Furthermore, the allegation that Iran had sent the explosives to Hamas is a bigger lie.

[Al-Julani] But Israeli Television quoted Mahmud Abu-Wardah, who was sentenced to life imprisonment in the PA jails and who was accused of masterminding the Jerusalem and Ashqelon operations, as saying that through its operations the Hamas Movement seeks to oust the Labor Party in the next elections?

[Ghawshah] In fact, all those who saw the interview with Abu-Wardah had the impression that what he said was programmed in cooperation between the Palestinian Preventive Security Forces and the Israeli Shabak in order to improve the popularity of the Labor Party and cast doubt on the mujahidin's inclinations. These statements were made under pressure and threat and cannot be considered correct.

[Al-Julani] Some PA officials charged that Hamas figures in Jordan were connected with the military actions in the occupied territories. What is your reply to these charges?

[Ghawshah] These charges are fabricated and totally false. Hamas figures in Jordan work only in the media and political fields. The aim of these charges is to export the crisis by embarrassing Jordan, and put pressure on these figures and prevent them from explaining the movement's media and political positions. Although these charges were made by Nabil Sha'th, Khalid Salam, and Ghazi al-Jabali, we believe that higher PA quarters stand behind them. The political and media figures who are present in a number of Arab and Islamic countries have no connection whatsoever with the military wing of the Hamas Movement. The military wing — command, soldiers, planning, implementation, and supervision — is in the occupied territories.

[Al-Julani] What about the PA and Israeli charges that Iran supported Hamas in carrying out the recent operations in order to sabotage the peace process?

[Ghawshah] This is an old-new story. The PA always tries to link Hamas Movement activities with an outside regional party, that is Iran. By doing so, it knows that these charges are in line with the Zionist-U.S. hostility toward Iran. We emphasize that neither Iran nor any other country has any connection with these operations which are carried out by the mujahidin in the occupied territories.

[Al-Julani] A number of statements were made and attributed to Hamas. These statements were contradictory and caused confusion among various circles. What is the truth concerning this issue?

[Ghawshah] I would like to say that several fake statements were issued over the last two weeks. These statements were supported by PA elements and were attributed to the Hamas Movement. This caused some confusion and indicated a conflict in the movement's positions. This was the objective of the parties that supported these false statements. However, we emphasize to all that the PA's attempts to distort the movement's image and cast doubt on its positions are doomed to failure.

[Al-Julani] But statements were made by Hamas figures in Gaza at a news conference in which they called for halting military operations for three months. Do these statements represent the movement's official position?

[Ghawshah] The movement has thus far not issued anything official about suspending resistance against occupation. Any statements to the contrary do not express the movement's official position.

[Al-Julani] You previously made an offer to the Israelis to stop targeting civilians from both sides under certain specific terms. Are you still prepared to consider such an offer?

[Ghawshah] Hamas announced in a statement issued several days ago that it is prepared to discuss this subject and to respond to any political endeavor or effort aimed at reducing the tension gripping the region with the view to preserving the rights of our people. As everybody knows, Hamas had avoided targeting civilians, however during the implementation of jihad operations losses occur sometimes among civilians. Hamas had proposed excluding civilians from the zone of continuous conflict between the Palestinian people and the Zionist invaders under a certain specific concept, however the Zionist occupation government has not responded to that, but continued its operations by killing civilians and defenseless Hamas Movement elements through oriental Jews, settlers, and the army. This killing took place in cold blood, where more than 20 active members of the Hamas Movement were liquidated in 1995, mainly in the Hebron region, after their homes were attacked by missiles and demolished by bulldozers. In other cases, some members were shot to death. Detainees also continued to be tortured by electric shocks, which resulted in the martyrdom of five Hamas detainees in Israeli prisons with the approval of the Zionist government, which approved those torture methods. Palestinian youths also continued to be denigrated and humiliated. Moreover, Zionist authorities continued their refusal to release Palestinian male and female detainees, who are mainly Islamists. So, we have responded and continue to respond positively to the subject, and we hold the enemy government fully responsible for the continuation of this situation.

[Al-Julani] How do you view the reactions in the Palestinian areas which were occupied in 1948 against the recent suicide operations?

[Ghawshah] No doubt, our Palestinian people in the areas which were occupied in 1948 experience difficult circumstances under the Zionist occupation. So, it is only natural for them to try to continue with their life without being exposed to Zionist oppression. However, there has been an obvious exaggeration by some persons, such as Ahmad al-Tibi and 'Abdallah Nimr Darwish. Ahmad al-Tibi has taken upon himself to agitate Palestinians in the areas which were occupied in 1948 and also in the West Bank and Gaza. He called upon those masses to come out in the streets and express their opposition to the suicide operations. As for 'Abdallah Nimr Darwish, he adopted some regretful stands when he convened a meeting of Islamic shari'a men in Kafr Qasim and made them issue a ruling that the youths who carried out the recent operations are not martyrs, but suicide bombers. He is now trying to obtain a similar ruling from al-Azhar. This is exactly what Peres had demanded. This subject is now very clear to every Muslim, and Muslim ulema have given their final word on it throughout the ages. The great ulema of our present age have also confirmed the legitimacy of resisting occupation by describing it as a most sacred duty which is incumbent on every male and female Muslim until the liberation of the blessed land and Holy Jerusalem—the land which witnessed the night journey and the ascension to heaven of our lord Prophet Muhammad, may the peace and blessings of God be upon him. Thus, we call upon Muslim ulema everywhere to confront this unjust campaign on Islam and the land of Muslims, Palestine, in order to scuttle the attempts of the forces of darkness and the enemies of Islam who describe jihad for the sake of God as terrorism.

Muslim ulema are also called upon to confront the leaders of the Zionist entity who slight the Islamic religion. For example, Teddy Kolek, former mayor of Jerusalem and member of the Labor Party, had previously slighted the prophet, may the peace and blessings of God be upon him, and the event of the night journey and the ascension to heaven, considering it as a myth and imagination; and also enemy Prime Minister Peres who slighted the concept of martyrdom for the sake of God and the heavenly abode of the martyr.

We consider our faithful Palestinian people wherever they may be, whether in the areas occupied in 1948, the West Bank, or the diaspora, as one unified people. The overwhelming majority of this people will continue to adhere to the land of their fathers and forefathers from the river to the sea. They will also continue on the course of resisting occupation by all available means, since it is a legitimate resistance which is upheld by heavenly shari'a and international laws.

[Al-Julani] The Hamas Movement is facing a large-scale international onslaught. In your opinion, what should the Arab and Islamic people and their Islamic movements do to help you confront this onslaught?

[Ghawshah] It is clear that the Zionist entity is now seeking to liquidate the Hamas Movement once and for all, whether this is done by arrests or murder, demolition of homes or closure of institutions or exhausting financial, political, and media resources. The Zionist entity is supported in this endeavor by the U.S. Administration, which seeks to take advantage of this campaign in the U.S. elections at the end of 1996 to win the support of the Zionist lobby.

The Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, which is the vanguard of the struggling Palestinian people and the Arab and Islamic nations in the face of Zionist schemes and ambitions, must never be left alone to face this campaign. What is needed is a real Islamic stand by the side of the Islamic movement in Palestine by extending political, media, material, and popular support for it and strongly confronting the onslaught and the war declared by Peres. There is a conviction that the Arab and Islamic nations are capable of doing that. It is not enough to issue statements of condemnation and denunciation. Truly Allah loves those who fight in His cause in battle array, as if they were a solid cemented structure. [Koranic verse]

[Al-Julani] An international conference will be held in Sharm al-Shaykh on 13 March to fight so-called terrorism. How do you view this conference?

[Ghawshah] There may be several reasons why this conference was called. However, we think the main purpose is to support the Jewish community in the wake of the four painful strikes which caused this community to experience a crisis of fear and doubt about the future of the Zionist entity's state. In addition, the summit seeks to support the Labor Party and the settlement process, which is now in a very critical situation.

This conference also seeks to distort the image of resistance, jihad, and the liberation movement in Palestine and accuse it of terrorism. This is very serious. The participation of some Arab countries is regrettable and a very serious thing to do. We would like here to say that the Zionists, who seek to show that the national Islamic liberation movement in Palestine is a terrorist movement, are masters of world terrorism and state terrorism. The Zionists established their state on terrorism and in the name of terrorism. One still recalls their main massacres: Blowing up the King David Hotel in Jerusalem, Dayr Yasin, Kafr Qasim, the killing of Egyptian POW's, the daily bombardment of the Lebanese people, and other criminal actions.

We in the Hamas Movement will pay no attention to this conference and will continue our legitimate resistance to the usurping occupation of the land of Palestine. We, along with all Hamas supporters, will hold our ground in the face of all attempts to uproot us. We are confident that God will grant us victory and are certain that God will preserve our message. Seeset though not how Allah sets forth a parable? A goodly word like a goodly tree, whose root is firmly fixed, and its branches reach to the heavens. [Koranic verse]

I tell our steadfast, patient people that the campaign against Islam and against strugglers who fight in the cause of God will backfire on the enemies of God. Those to whom men said: A great army is gathering against you, so fear them. But it only increased their faith. They said: For us Allah sufficeth and He is the best guardian. And they returned with grace and bounty from Allah. No harm ever touched them, for they followed the good pleasure of Allah, and Allah is the Lord of bounties unbounded. [Koranic verse]

Yes, we are confident that those parties will not affect our people and will not weaken us. The people and the strugglers will return with grace and bounty from God and no harm will ever touch them. Our Zionist enemy will be disgraced and humiliated. The tougher the onslaught gets, the more certain, determined, and resolved we become to pursue our long road toward liberation.

Palestinian Affairs: Hamas Says Suicide Attacks on Israel 'Acts of Self Defense'

NC1303083496 Paris AFP in English
0822 GMT 13 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman, March 13 (AFP) — The Islamic militant movement Hamas on Wednesday [13 March] defended its suicide attacks in Israel as "acts of self defence" and urged world leaders to pressure Israel into withdrawing from occupied Palestinian land.

"Palestinian Mujahedin (freedom fighters) are eager to pursue the confrontation with Israel unless the international community puts an end to Israeli terrorism," said Hamas in a six-page printed letter addressed to world leaders participating in the "Summit of Peacemakers" in Egypt.

The letter, received by AFP in Amman, reveals details of strategy by the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) in its struggle against Israel and restates its previous offer of a ceasefire, rejected by the Jewish state.

Algeria

Algeria: FM To Present '3 Main Points' at Antiterrorism Summit

LD1203133296 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 12 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The final touches are being put to the preparations for the Sharm al-Shaykh summit on fighting terrorism and rescuing the Middle East peace process. [passage omitted]

Twenty-five delegations representing states and organizations will be attending the summit, including the Algerian delegation which will be led by Foreign Minister Ahmed Attaf. Algeria's intervention at this summit will be based on three main points: [the need to] stress the international nature of terrorism, the elimination of terrorist networks, and the renunciation of violence as a means of political expression.

Algeria: Zeroual Confers With FM Before Antiterrorism Summit

LD1203182196 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 12 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Liamine Zeroual today received Foreign Minister Ahmed Attaf on the eve of his departure for Cairo where he will participate in the Arab League's ordinary ministerial session. On the other hand, Attaf will represent Algeria in the Sharm al-Shaykh summit.

The foreign affairs minister will state Algeria's principled position and its views on international terrorism, which has become a new form for destabilizing the stability of countries and a true danger that threatenes international peace and security.

Algeria, which has paid an expensive price in its legitimate fight against terrorism, will take this opportunity — as it has done recently at the United Nations, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the Arab League, and the Organization of African Unity — to call for the adoption of an international and comprehensive consultative strategy for eliminating this phenomenon, which no-one can deny is an international phenomenon.

Algeria, which has waged alone a long struggle against terrorism, will use the conference's platform to call for non-discrimination and the need for a collective reply to international terrorism.

Algeria: Prime Minister Presents Government Program

LD1203173596 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 12 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Ahmed Ouyahia presented the program of his government before the members of the Transitional National Council this morning. The government program consists of four major objectives and they are: reinforcing democratic pluralism through the development of dialogue and consultations, reinforcing the state apparatus, building a modern economy, and reinforcing Algeria's position and interests on the international scene.

It is worth mentioning that after the opening ceremony of the extraordinary session of the council devoted to the examination and discussion of the government program, Transitional National Council Speaker Abdelkader Bensalah announced that new members were joining the council, including representatives of the Algerian Renewal Party. Over to our colleague Saad Eddine Fodil for more details:

[Begin Fodil recording] The extraordinary session of the Transitional National Council, the fourth since its creation, opened this morning to discuss the new government's program. Abdelkader Bensalah, speaker of the council, addressed the meeting and greeted the new members who joined the Transitional National Council. Out of the eight new members, three are replacing previous members and five come from the Algerian Renewal Party. Bensalah seized the opportunity to say that the entry of these new members would give a new impetus and another dimension to strengthen the representative status of the Transitional National Council. He greeted in particular the representatives of the Algerian Renewal Party who were entering the council for the first time. He also hailed their awareness of the real challenges and wagers facing the country. Bensalah said he hoped their entry would have a political significance with the other parties which did not take part in the Transitional National Council, especially as many of them were about to hold their congresses, which would be an occasion for their activists to assess the political reality in the country.

Bensalah added that the council discussed sensitive issues which required wide participation. Regarding relations between the Transitional National Council and the government, Bensalah reassured the prime minister and told him that he would get all support from all the members of the council in order to realize the common objectives, namely achieving economic efficiency and stability in the country. [end recording]

Moreover, Prime Minister Ahmed Ouyahia delivered a speech in which he outlined the program of his government in the economic and political areas. Over to Messaoud Boulatiour for more details:

[Begin Boulatiour recording] The speech delivered by the prime minister can be summed up into two main points, namely the current political situation in the country and the government's program of action in the economic area that is part of the five-year strategy of development which itself, as he said, was open to national discussion.

Regarding the current political situation in the country, the prime minister was eager to stress that terrorism had failed to undermine the stability of the state institutions. This phenomenon, he said, can be eliminated if some people refrained from raising the stakes and expressing unjustified doubts. The prime minister also expressed his government's readiness to complete the democratic and electoral process. However, he recalled the vision of President Liamine Zeroual towards this issue, namely the need to take measures gradually in order to avoid the same mistakes that were made in the past.

Regarding the economic crisis, the prime minister said that it was our country's main problem at the moment, and that it could be overcome by embarking on courageous reforms and freeing ourselves from the burden of the fears which, he said, are legitimate in some cases. However, he added that the continuation of these reforms at a quick pace was inevitable particularly in view of the heavy burden of the foreign debts.

The prime minister also defined the areas which should be affected by these reforms, namely the industrial sector, education, health, and social security. He said that the existing facts confirmed the need to overcome these fears of the current reforms by resorting to a coherent program without abandoning the principles of national solidarity, social justice and equal opportunities and by adopting the method of dialogue and consultations with a view to signing the social contract which remained a major objective in the government's action. [end recording]

Algeria: Socialist Front Leaders To Boycott Party Congress

LD1203175996 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in French 1130 GMT 12 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Less than 24 hours before the opening of the second congress of the Socialist Forces Front [FFS] party, scheduled to take place from 13 to 15 March at the Club des Pins in Algiers, the party of of Hocine Ait Ahmed is facing up to a serious crisis as four high-ranking members of its national leadership announced yesterday evening in a statement sent to the press their decision to boycott the congress.

Hamid Lounaoussi, Said Khelil, Rachid Hallat, and Said Hamdani — all former interim general secretaries of the party — are refusing to back a congress whose credibility, they say, has already been damaged. They particularly criticized Mr. Ait Ahmed for having monopolized the decisionmaking process which led him to sign an agreement with unreliable partners.

Finally, the dissidents reaffirmed their adhesion to and support for any sincere initiative which aims at achieving and guaranteeing peace, liberty, and democracy.

Algeria: Internal Division on Eve of Socialist Front Congress

LD1203230596 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 2200 GMT 12 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Socialist Forces Front [FSS] will hold its second congress at the Club des Pins, during which it will discuss numerous organizational issues and will determine the front's positions on some issues put forward on the national arena. The FFS congress, however, is being held in an atmosphere of internal division.

The trend known as the Tizi Ouzou group will not participate in the congress. The group's activists Rachid Hallat, Said Khelil, Hamid Lounaoussi, and Said Hamdani oppose the line adopted by Mr. Ail Ahmed's party since the signing of the Rome accord. They say that the circumstances of preparing for the congress have affected its credibility, and that the congress in their view will not enable its legitimacy to be confirmed.

The Tizi Ouzou group stresses that its participation in the congress and the party's activities depends on the FFS steering away from the extremist trends.

Algeria: Ministry Says No Guarantees for FFS Leader's Security

LD1203191796 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in French 1800 GMT 12 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The Interior Ministry strongly denied this evening the statement made by Mr. Bouhadef, the interim secretary general of the Socialist Forces Front [FFS], to the AL WASAT magazine, published in London. Speaking on the participation of the secretary general in the congress, he said that Hocine Ait Ahmed was not given guarantees for his security. The Interior Ministry said these allegations are false. [passage omitted]

This denial has thus been issued less than 24 hours before the opening of the FFS congress which will be held on 13, 14, and 15 March under the chairmanship of its secretary general Hocine Ait Ahmed who arrived in Algiers at about 1800 this evening. [passage omitted]

Algeria: Security Services Kill 'Criminal' After Attempted Attack

LD1203180496 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 12 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A statement by the security services said that their forces at 1100 today [1000 GMT] managed to eliminate a criminal following an attempted attack on a security barrier at Ben Aknoun municipality in the capital Algiers. The same source added that the search operation was continuing to eliminate his partners.

Algeria: Official—Germany To Pursue Resident Algerian Terrorists

LD1203201196 Algiers ENTV Television Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 12 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] After a visit which lasted three days, Mr. Hoyer, the German minister of state at the foreign ministry [as received] left Algeria today and was seen off at Houari Boumedienne international airport by Lahcen Mousaoui, the secretary of state for cooperation and Maghareban affairs.

In a statement before departure, Mr. Hoyer assessed his visit which enabled him to view the economic transformations being experienced by Algeria and other issues. Mohamed Mouncef reports:

[Hoyer, in German, with superimposed Arabic translation] During my visit to Algeria I have had talks with a number of Algerian officials. We dealt with a number of topics concerning Algerian-German relations and Algerian relations with the European Union. I also tried to know more about the economic and political reforms pursued by Algeria and the democratic application following the recent presidential elections. We also dealt with human rights, freedom of the press and the common fight of terrorism, the subject which coincides with the summit at Sharm al-Shaykh. [passage omitted]

Concerning the Algerian terrorists resident in Germany we face a number of problems in terms of defining their number. However, we do deal with the problem seriously. Some of them are under detention due to their involvement in smuggling and the federal government might withdraw the application of refugee status on those involved.

Pursuing the terrorists resident in Germany, there is no major problem concerning the terrorists or those accused of being so whom the German police know their addresses. The problem remains with regard to the persons whom we do not know their addresses or their connections with the terrorist groups.

In conclusion, the main outcome of our visit to Algeria was to push the economic relations between our two countries. Those relations were not in the past at the level of the Algerian economic and scientific potentials nor the level of our will to cooperate with Algeria. My task in this visit is to prepare the way for the industrialists and encourage them to invest.

Libya

Libya: Sharma al-Shaykh Summit Said Dedicated to Security of Israel

LD1303120396 Tripoli JANA in English 1102 GMT 13 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Occupied Palestine, Al Rabia [March] 13, Jamahiriyah News Agency — The Israeli enemy radio has confirmed that Washington had already prepared the final declaration which will be issued at the end of Sharma al-Shaykh conference and that Washington delivered copies to the Israelis.

The radio quoted paragraphs of the declaration which included an announcement by the delegates for their full cooperation and coordination with Israeli security organs.

The preparation of such declaration before even the conference is held and the delivery of copies to the Israelis as well as the broadcast of paragraphs by the enemies radio confirms what we have said previously that the conference is basically dedicated to serve the security of the Israeli enemy.

In view of such American indifference with the participating states in Sharm al-Shaykh conference which constitutes a serious precedent in diplomatic conventions as we have one state that prepared the final statement and is asking other countries to sign it. So what is the justification for the conference. The only reason for that could be to express blind obedience for America.

This confirms the extent of humiliation which will affect all those taking part in the conference because they will be mere spectators and they can not say no to America.

Libya: Al-Sanusi Urges 'Summit on Terrorism' To Act Against al-Qadhdhafi

NC1203222596 Paris AFP in English 2133 GMT 12 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Nicosia, March 12 (AFP) — The exiled pretender to the Libyan throne, Prince

Muhammad al-Sanusi, on Tuesday [12 March] urged the world's first summit on terrorism to take urgent action against the government of Libyan leader Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi.

"Libya needs rapid change," the prince told AFP by telephone, calling on world leaders attending Wednesday's summit in the Egyptian Red Sea resort of Sharm al-Shaykh to cooperate to wipe out terrorism, of which he said Tripoli was a leading proponent.

He also urged the international community to impose a total oil embargo on Libya to prevent it from "lavishing its resources on terrorism."

"The Libyan people will not suffer from an embargo which would in fact preserve Libya's wealth, which all goes on terrorism."

Prince Muhammad, who lives in London, said a change in Libya required a return to "constitutional legitimacy violated in 1969 "when his uncle King Idris was overthrown by Colonel al-Qadhdhafi in a coup."

Libya, under UN sanctions for its alleged support for terrorism, was not invited to the "Summit of the Peacemakers" in Sharm al-Shaykh to be co-hosted by US President Bill Clinton and Egyptian leader Husni Mubarak.

Libya: JANA—U.S. Pressure Brought About Sharm al-Shaykh Summit

LD1203211396 Tripoli JANA in English 1741 GMT 12 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Sharm al-Shaykh, al-Rabia [March] 12, (JAMAHIRIYAH NEWS AGENCY) — The Egyptian city of Sharm al-Shaykh will host tomorrow, Wednesday, a conference which is basically dedicated to help the security of the Israeli enemy.

Numerous states in the area rushed to announce their participation in the activities of this conference which comes following intense American pressures, after the death of scores of Israelis in the operations witnessed recently in occupied Palestine.

Observers have never been astonished for the huge political inertia towards this conference behind which the American weight was put, in response to American demands for the attendance of the conference, particularly within the pattern of formal American announcement, expressing absolute bias for the Israeli enemy, the intensification of America's infinite support for the Israelis, and the announcement of the American president of his intention to attend a meeting for the Israeli Government after the end of the conference in which various heads of Israeli security and intelligence organs participate.

Observers noted that the orchestrated American media campaign for convening this conference does not differ from the electoral campaigns that precede American presidential elections, as America fiercely attempts to restrict the agenda items of the conference in one concern only, that is maintaining the security of the Israelis, and the extortion of formal stances from the delegates of the conference in line with the American Israelis designs against the Arab nation, and to win American Jews votes in the elections.

The holding of this conference and the immediate announcement by some Arabs to participate come at a time when Arabs themselves fail to hold their own Arab summit since 1990, despite the deteriorating Arab situation which makes it very urgent to hold an Arab summit.

Libya: JANA Editor on Sharm al-Shaykh Summit

LD1303010596 Tripoli Voice of Greater Arab Homeland in Arabic 0015 GMT 13 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] News says that a great difference has emerged between Egypt's stance vis-a-vis the Sharm al-Shaykh conference and that of the Israeli enemy. At a time when Egypt says that this conference is being held in order to bolster peace in the Arab region, the Israeli enemy says that this conference is being held to combat what it terms as terrorism.

The JANA Arab affairs editor has commented on this great difference between the Egyptian and Israeli stance vis-a-vis the Sharm al-Shaykh conference by saying that at a time when Egypt has officially announced that the Sharm al-Shaykh summit is being held for the purpose of bolstering peace in the region, the Israelis insist in their statements and through their media that the conference is being held in order to combat what they term as terrorism in order to serve their own hostile aims and to obtain the support of the participants in the conference for their expansionist plans and their repressive operations against the Arab people in Palestine and Lebanon. The editor pointed out that the Israeli enemy was also aiming, by imposing this point of view, at gaining election propaganda for the terrorist Peres so that his party will not lose the so-called elections. The editor said that this Israeli stance to insist on saying that the Sharm al-Shaykh conference is for combating terrorism, is in despite of Egypt on whose territory the conference is being held and who, on its part, insists that the conference should be held under the slogan of serving peace and not as the Israel enemy wants. The reason for this is that Egypt realizes that the Israelis are the source of real terrorism in the region, as they alone have a huge nuclear arsenal containing more than 200 nuclear warheads; also they stockpile biological, chemical, and other weapons of destruction, which America supplied them with. This is in addition to missiles whose range reaches all parts of the Arab homeland. The editor pointed out that if the conference supported the Israeli point of view by letting its slogan be the combating of the so-called terrorism then this would mean that a disturbance in the psychological, political, and military balance has occurred between Egypt and the Israeli enemy. In this case Egypt will be the loser. The Editor reaffirmed that the conflict in this case is not between the [word indistinct] and the Israelis, but between Egypt and the Israelis as Egypt is pushing in the direction of peace while the Israelis are striving to realize their hostile intentions and aims at the expense of the Arab nation and its just causes. The JANA Arab affairs editor concluded his comment by reaffirming that when Egypt speaks in the name of the Arab nation and defends the latter, it deserves the support of all the Arabs from the Atlantic Ocean to the Arabian Gulf.

Libya: Official Source Protests 'Racist' Statements by France

LD1203134596 Tripoli JANA in French
1619 GMT 11 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Tripoli, 11 Mar (ITAR-TASS) — The French foreign minister made a statement in which he made allegations regarding the Great Jamahiriyah and its links with what he called "terrorism".

The France-2 television channel cited the French minister as saying there are countries, including Libya, which cause "problems".

A source in the Secretariat of the General People's Congress stated in response to the French minister's remarks: The Secretariat of the General People's Congress will lodge a complaint against the French Government, and more precisely against the French foreign minister, for implicating the Great Jamahiriyah in this so-called terrorism.

The source added that the statements demonstrate a policy which is racist and hostile to the Arab nation, and such statements made by French leaders will seriously affect French interests in the Great Jamahiriyah.

The source said the Secretariat of the General People's Congress will summon the Libyan Chamber of Commerce and French companies working in the Great Jamahiriyah to inform them officially that the racist statements against the Arabic Libyan people will have serious consequences for French economic interests. The source said the Great Jamahiriyah will consider excluding French firms from the huge gas project, which will be offered to international tender, and whose cost amounts to billions of dollars.

The source from the Secretariat of the General People's Congress concluded that the government must take stock and take full account of the fact that its paramount economic interests in Libya are linked to its political positions with respect to the Arabic Libyan people and the Arab nation, as was said by the Basic People's Committees, which hold the key to power and to decisions through their debates on the Great Jamahiriyah's foreign policy.

Morocco

Morocco: Papers View 'Antiterrorism' Summit in Egypt

LD1203132796 Rabat MAP in English
1238 GMT 12 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Rabat, Mar. 12 (MAP) — Two Moroccan dailies Tuesday stressed the importance of the anti-terrorism summit to begin Wednesday in Egypt in saving the peace process in the Middle East.

"AL BAYANE" of the Party for Progress and Socialism (PPS, opposition) describes the holding of this summit as "a positive step" in the struggle against terrorism and violence. The main target of this summit, the daily says, "is to overcome the difficult stage the Middle East peace process is going through".

"AL BAYANE" points out to the criticism voiced by certain Arab and Moslem countries which consider this summit as "a political move meant to vest Israeli terrorism with a sort of legitimacy, while putting an end to the struggle of the Palestinian people to defend its sacred rights". "Terrorism is not specific to the Middle East. It is rather a world plague that requires the mobilization of all efforts", the daily said.

For its part, "AL ITTIHAD AL ICHTIRAKI" of the Socialist Union of Popular Forces (USFP/opposition), stressed that the prompt and positive response of the international community, particularly the European Union, to the holding of the summit, shows this community' s eagerness to save the peace process.

The daily, which noted that the present situation in the Middle East is the product of Israeli shilly-shallying in implementing the Oslo peace accords, called on the international community to pressure Israel to respect its commitments.

Israel is the first answerable for the situation inside its territory, and "the Israelis themselves have maybe contributed to creating this situation more than the Palestinian Authority", the daily said.

At least 25 countries out of the 29 invited, are scheduled to attend this summit, among whom the two co-sponsors of the Middle East peace process, the United States and Russia. On the eve of this gathering, Egyptian President Husni Mubarak voiced optimism that the "peacemakers" summit would reach positive conclusions that will put back the Middle East peace process on the right track.

Mubarak, who was interviewed by Egyptian "MAYU" newspaper explained that the difficulties were caused by "reciprocal" acts of violence between Palestinians and Israelis. He hoped the Sharm al-Shaykh summit will advance the peace process with the Palestinian side, considering the Palestinian cause as crux of the Mideast problem, and on the Syrian track "so that a just and comprehensive peace prevail in the area".

Sudan

Sudan: Al-Bashir Briefed on Efforts To Improve Ties With Saudis

EA1203193296 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 1300 GMT 12 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Staff Lieutenant General 'Umar Hasan Ahmad al-Bashir, president of the Republic, today in his office at the Republican Palace, received Mr. Sharaf al-Din Banaqah, minister of engineering works in Khartoum state, who was sent as his special envoy to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

After the meeting, Dr. Sharaf al-Din Banaqah said he had briefed the president of the Republic on the outcome of his recent visit to Saudi Arabia and the contacts with its leaders. He went on to say his visit was part of Sudan's diplomatic campaign aimed at acquainting brothers and friends in Arab and friendly countries with UN Security Council Resolution Number 1044, the flagrant accusations it contains and the fierce media campaign directed against Sudan [passage omitted].

He added that the brothers in Saudi Arabia respect and appreciate the historic and brotherly relations between the two countries, pointing out that there had been some slight misunderstanding brought about by circumstances, but he emphasized both sides were endeavoring to remove it and restore cordial, bilateral relations.

Sudan: Government, Rebel Faction Agree To Continue Cease-Fire

EA1203205696 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 1300 GMT 12 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Translated Excerpt] During a very high-level meeting, an agreement to continue the ceasefire was signed between representatives of the Sudanese Government and Riak Machar's faction of the South Sudan Independence Movement [SSIM].

This was reported to SUNA [SUDANESE NEWS AGENCY] by the deputy director general of the Supreme Peace Council, Mr. Muhammad Yusuf Abdullah, who made it clear that the agreement had reaffirmed the need for a more stable continuation of the ceasefire in all areas.

The two sides reaffirmed their commitment to a peaceful resolution of the conflict through a comprehensive and just arrangement which would guarantee the rights and aspirations of citizens. Mr. Muhammad Yusuf concluded that the SSIM initiative to declare a ceasefire with the government had created conditions favourable to holding these bilateral talks.

It is worth mentioning that the government reciprocated the ceasefire announcement following President al-Bashir's visit to Kenya during which he discussed with Kenyan head of state, Daniel arap Moi, ways of reactivating the IGADD [Inter-Governmental Authority on Drought and Development] sponsored peace initiative.

Sudan: Army Brigade in South Reportedly Refusing Orders

EA1303115796 (Clandestine) Voice of Sudan Voice of the National Democratic Alliance in Arabic 1715 GMT 12 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In an escalating state of disobedience within the ranks of the Sudanese Armed Forces, the Third Brigade, currently deployed between Juba and Torit [the south], has refused to carry out orders to continue with operations as directed by the army general command.

In this connection, the officers and men of the brigade have effectively arrested their commander, Staff Brigadier Ali Sharif al-Tahir, and another brigadier, who was the brigade's operations officer.

Meanwhile, the general military situation has seriously deteriorated to a point of near complete collapse, especially in the areas of Yirol, Torit, and Kapoeta. The National Islamic Front's militias, the army and popular defense forces did not receive supplies and reinforcements, particularly after a series of defeats in recent months, during which 13 towns and garrisons fell to the Sudan People's Liberation Army.

Sudan: Military Spokesman Says Coup Attempt Influenced From Abroad

EA1203210796 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 1300 GMT 12 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Major General Muhammad 'Abd-al-Qadir, official spokesman for the Armed Forces, has said that preliminary investigations into the recent abortive coup has revealed [words indistinct] foreign influence. He added that the coup plotters intended to derail the ongoing elections and undermine the consultative democracy being instituted in the country.

He told SUNA [SUDAN NEWS AGENCY] that the coup attempt was carried out by five officers in active service commanded by a colonel, three retired officers and a very limited number of NCO's and men. He added that the security organs had been monitoring their meetings and moves before apprehending them. He said the limited number of officers and men involved in the attempt showed that the entire Armed Forces supported the [Islamic] option of the Sudanese people.

He went on to say that investigations into the incident were still going on in order to discover the extent of the conspiracy, and all the facts would be revealed to citizens at the end of the probe.

In his statement to SUNA, General Muhammad 'Abd-al-Qadir concluded that the failure of the coup plotters to attract a big number of participants was enough of a rebuff to conspirators who wanted to explode internal situation in the country.

He said the Armed Forces, God willing, would always remain loyal to all the [National Salvation Revolution's] promises in defense of the motherland, heritage and cultural orientation.

Sudan: Parts of Omdurman Province Report 90% Voter Turnout

EA1103115696 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 0430 GMT 11 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The secretary general of the national convention, Dr. Ghazi Salah al-Din, has said that the ongoing elections are a logical outcome of the political system adopted in the country.

In a press conference at the national convention secretariat yesterday, he added that the elections were not held to please any given quarter, but came as an inevitable outcome of the political system in the country, especially that the government had promised to hold them more than two years ago. [passage omitted]

In the last two days of the ongoing elections, voter turnout in the geographical constituencies reached about 90 percent in some parts of Omdurman Province.

The commissioner of Omdurman Province, Staff Brigadier al-Sadiq Muhammad Salim, said that the elections process was going on well and that no incidents of violence or disturbances were reported. At the time members of the technical committees were exerting great efforts to ensure the success of elections.

His Excellency said the commission had toured a number of voting centers and commended the enthusiasm of the citizens toward the elections which, he said, reflected the people's political awareness and their desire to exercise their legitimate rights.

Bahrain

Bahrain: U.S. Administration Said To Urge Dialogue With Opposition

MM1203165696 London AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI in Arabic 12 Mar 96 p 1

[Unattributed report: "United States Urges Bahrain To Initiate Dialogue With Opposition"]

[FBIS Translated Text] London, AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI — The Bahraini opposition insisted yesterday that the U.S. Administration has urged the Manama government to initiate a dialogue with those calling for the restoration of democracy in the country, in order to extricate Bahrain from its worsening political crisis.

The U.S. appeal was announced at the end of a visit to Washington by Shaykh Hamad Bin-'Isa Al Khalifah, the Bahraini heir apparent.

In London, Lord Avebury, head of the Human Rights Committee in the British House of Lords, submitted a memorandum to the Bahraini Government through its embassy in the British capital.

The sources stressed that the memorandum, which was read by the British Foreign Office, provides a compromise between the government's position and that of the opposition.

A statement issued by the Bahrain Free Movement and faxed to AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI stresses that the campaign of raids and arrests mounted by the security forces led by the British officer Ian Henderson continued yesterday against houses and schools.

A large police force attacked a preparatory school in the Jidd Hafs and arrested 12 students on charges of raising slogans demanding democracy.

Eyewitnesses stressed that the attacking force assaulted the students in front of passersby in order to spread fear in the area, which is known for its freedom activities and demands. The statement listed a large number of people who have been arrested in their homes recently, among them girls and boys no more than 16 years old.

Later, the most prominent Bahraini opposition forces issued a statement stressing their unity with the demand for democracy.

The statement — signed by the Bahrain Free Movement, the Islamic Front, and the Committee for Coordination Between the Popular Front and the National Liberation Front — said that "the Bahraini people will not surrender, no matter how severe the repression and the terrorism." It stressed that "the only way to extricate the country from the current crisis is to heed the voice of reason, halt repressive actions, and initiate a dialogue with the people's forces."

Kuwait

Kuwait: Conference on POWs Held by Iraq Opens in London

LD1203163396 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 1330 GMT 12 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] London, 12 Mar (KUNA) — Shaykh Salim al-Sabah, chairman of the National Committee for the Affairs of POWs and the Missing, stressed that the aim behind the convening of the first international conference on human rights and Kuwaiti POWs is to draw world attention to that serious humanitarian problem.

In an opening speech at the conference here today, he said that the gathering is a rare opportunity that brings together many prominent international figures whose roles in the liberation of the State of Kuwait is: "Still engraved in our hearts and minds."

Shaykh Salim again expressed the gratitude of the State of Kuwait and its thanks to the government and people of Britain for taking part in the war of the liberation of Kuwait.

He also welcomed the British Government and people's interest and support for the conference, which is being held over two days at the Dorchester hotel in central London.

The chairman of the National Committee for the Affairs of POWs and the Missing said that the presence of British Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind is firm evidence of Britain's continued contribution to Kuwait's main cause.

He pointed out that although five years have passed since the liberation of Kuwait from the treacherous Iraqi occupation, a total of 604 Kuwaiti and other prisoners, whose arrest and transfer to Iraq was confirmed, are still being detained in Iraqi prisons, and Iraq has not offered any information on them.

Shaykh Salim added that the Kuwaiti people have not enjoyed happy times because: "They have been lost amid our sorrow and pain for our dear ones."

Qatar

Qatar: Israel's Peres Invited To Make First Visit

NC1203141896 Paris AFP in English 1340 GMT 12 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Doha, March 12 (AFP)—Qatar has invited Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres for a groundbreaking first visit, becoming the second Gulf Arab state after Oman to welcome an Israeli leader, a Qatar official said Tuesday [12 Mar].

The two countries will announce the opening of commercial interests sections during the trip, expected between March 25 and April 5, the official said.

Oman hosted the late Israeli prime minister Yitzhaq Rabin on a landmark trip to the Gulf in December 1994 and the two countries announced the opening of commercial interests sections on January 27.

Peres' trip will be officially announced at the peace summit in Egypt on Wednesday.

Qatar is sending a delegation to the summit headed by deputy prime minister Shaykh 'Abdallah-Bin-Khalifah Al Thani and including Foreign Minister Shaykh Hamad Bin-Jasim Al Thani.

"We have invited Shim'on Peres to come, and when Peres comes we will announce that we will open commercial interests sections," the Qatari official, who requested anonymity, told AFP.

Yemen

Yemen: Assembly Speaker Considers Summit 'Futile'

MM1203144196 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 12 Mar 96 p 1

[Report by Faysal Makram: "Although Yemen Will Attend the Summit, al-Ahmar Tells AL-HAYAH: We Believe Participation Is of No Benefit to Sanaa"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Sanaa — Shaykh 'Abdallah Bin-Husayn al-Ahmar, speaker of the Yemeni House of Representatives and chairman of the Higher Council of the Yemeni Reform Grouping that "his party is committed to its clear position on the terrorism and violence targeting innocent people."

In a statement to AL-HAYAH yesterday he said that "the so-called peacemakers summit, scheduled to be held tomorrow (Wednesday) in Sharm al-Shaykh in Egypt, comes after the recent fedayeen operations in occupied Palestine, as though the world is required to protect Israel's security and prevent the owners of the legitimate rights, that is the Palestinians, from fighting the Israeli occupation."

On Yemen's agreement to participate in the conference, Shaykh 'Abdallah said: "We believe participation in such conferences which take no account of the Palestinian people's rights and their annihilation and torture at the hands of the Israeli occupation is of no benefit to Yemen."

He wondered: "Why are such conferences not convened when Arabs and Muslims are subjected to violations, torture, murder, and imprisonment, as is the case with the Palestinian people, for example? We believe that the Sharm al-Shaykh conference is futile and designed to protect Israel." [passage omitted]

Yemen: Deputy Premier on Reform Group's Stance on 'Antiterrorism' Summit

MM1303103396 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 13 Mar 96 p 2

[Report by 'Abd-al-Qawi al-Shami: "Yemeni Deputy Premier al-Anisi Tells AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT: Reform Grouping Agreed to Yemen's Participation in Sharm al-Shaykh Summit"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Sanaa — Yemeni Deputy Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Wahhab al-Anisi has stressed that terrorism is a world phenomenon which no quarter, conference, or state can eliminate without discussing and tackling its causes.

He pointed out that the cornerstone of Middle East peace is for the Palestinian people to obtain all their rights like any other people in the world and to enjoy stability and citizenship [statehood].

In a statement to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT, al-Anisi said that by agreeing to Yemen's participation in the peace and antiterrorism conference scheduled to be held in Sharm al-Shaykh today, Wednesday, the leadership of the Yemeni Reform Grouping [YRG], partner in the ruling coalition in Yemen, wanted to repudiate those trying to distort Yemen's position on terrorism and its democratic experiment. He added that the YRG's national responsibility prompted a positive response to the invitation to attend this conference, taking account of the potential results of not attending or boycotting the conference.

Asked whether the YRG's agreement means that it has backtracked on its policy of condemning normalization with Israel and opposing the Middle East process, al-Anisi said: The Sharm al-Shaykh conference has nothing to do with normalization with Israel, because it will discuss the terrorism issue in general.

He pointed out that Yemen's participation in this conference will give it the opportunity to put forward its views openly and clearly and to condemn once again all forms of terrorism, regardless of the quarter committing it, be it governmental, nongovernmental, political, or partisan.

He stressed that his party's agreement to attend this conference has no impact on his opinion of normalization efforts with Israel, nor is it a new position on the Middle East peace process or part of the proceedings of this process.

As is known, the Yemeni Reform Grouping also voiced reservations about yemen's participation in the economic summit held in Amman at the end of last year. It also boycotted the visit to Yemen last month by an Israeli Knesset delegation.

Yemen: Joint Yemeni-Saudi Border Committee Meets 12 Mar

JN1303084096 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0430 GMT 13 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Joint Yemeni-Saudi Committee in charge of demarcating borders between the two countries held a meeting yesterday. This meeting is part of the committee's 5th session currently being held in Sanaa within the framework of the duties delegated to it in accordance with the Article 2 of the memorandum of understanding. During the meeting, the committee reviewed the most important issues on the agenda of its current session.

Iraq: Saddam Addresses Iraqi Kurdish Officials

JN1303 [illegible]496 Baghdad Iraq Television Network in Arabic 1839 GMT 12 96

["Text" of speech by Iraqi President Saddam Husayn to heads and members of the Legislative and Executive Councils of the Kurdistan Autonomous Region and members of the general secretariat of the National, Patriotic, and Progressive Front; place and date not given—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] Prior to the 1968 revolution, the most important question which occupied my mind at the time was: Would the revolution, upon its success, open the way for vengeance, or would we be dutybound to heal our people's wounds away from the spirit of vengeance, feuds, and suchlike behavior? It then occurred to me that it would, perhaps, be better to raise the issue at the leadership level and make a decision on it before proceeding with the military part of the revolutionary plan; that is, how we would storm the strongholds of the defunct regime, overthrow that regime, and establish a popular one in its place. We decided that we should pose this question and thus relieve ourselves and our comrades. We should ask: Is there a spirit for vengeance and feuds in the hearts, or should those hearts work for the long-term aims and turn them into a reality in people's lives?

We placed this issue before our comrades during a meeting which was held at the residence of a comrade member of the Iraq Command, who is still alive today. I requested the discussion of this issue and explained the reasons which made me believe that we should make tolerance replace hatred, vengeance, etc.. Using my expressive abilities, which were definitely weaker than they are now, I remember saying that had suffered enough from wounds. This took place some 27 years ago. I said: Iraq has suffered enough from wounds.

Iraq had witnessed many events from 1959, to be exact, to that day on which we held our meeting, which was only a few days before the implementation of the revolution. I said that Iraq could no longer suffer more wounds and that what it needed was someone who would heal the open wounds on its body and soul so that it would be able to assume its responsibility and push forward with greater ability in order to achieve the aims of the revolution when God granted success in it.

It was easy to contemplate revenge at the time, because even within the leadership there were some comrades who, upon recalling their wounds, were carried away by their emotions and displayed the spirit of vengeance and feuds. This took place even during the meeting of the leadership. But we said very clearly: This is the way that serves Iraq and the aims which the revolutionaries were setting forth at that meeting in order to change the system of government. Following a long discussion, this principle was approved. It was also decided that following the success of the revolution no one at all would be punished for harming the party.

As an expression of this stand at the time, a youth meeting was convened at 14 July Casino one evening after midnight when the casino was empty. This casino was located at the beginning of the road leading to the present al-Muthanna Airport. Following the success of the revolution, I went to see those youths and told them that the need did not rise to give them any assignment, since the revolution went off smoothly with God's help and the need did not arise to ask them to carry out any of the detailed tasks. I went to see the youths. And, I recall that one of them cried out and said: Let us go to the residence of Rashid Muhsin. Muhsin was then director of public security. While in that capacity, Muhsin did great harm to the party. In that charged atmosphere, there was no room for discussion or give-and-take. So, in order to quickly determine the issue, I told them: No one will go to the residence of Rashid Muhsin, because he is already under arrest. Actually, Rashid Muhsin was not under arrest. Later, he managed to leave Iraq for Egypt. Had they gone, they would have killed Rashid Muhsin and we would have opened the way for a new chain of events and violated the decision we made at the leadership.

There was also another security officer, may God rest his soul in peace, who did me personal harm. You will recall that following the now well-known anecdote, I, too, was detained by the security authorities. This particular security officer was detained to protect him from any assault. Had he been free, someone would have harmed him under the drive for vengeance,. And, we did not want to see anything of the kind happening to him.

But, after he had served a specific term and emotions had calmed down, this security officer was released and retired from service. Later, he was appointed assistant director general in the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs. I do not know if he then became director general of the ministry or not. This security officer then passed away, may God rest his soul in peace. As an expression of that policy, we looked after his interests; that is, when he and his family needed something, we did not hesitate to help.

The only exception was one case which happened to me personally, and I remember speaking to the leadership about it on an earlier occasion. The commander of

Camp-1, where I was detained, came to my office and requested to meet with me. I declined to receive him, but asked the director of the presidential office or the secretary to meet with him, see what he wanted, and resolve his problem. I knew his kind of personality. I did not decline because he was more harmful than others, but because my view was that his personality and behavior did not warrant such a meeting. That was all.

There were others whom I received yet they were more harmful than this man. Before coming here, I was talking to one of them and tried to find out if he still harbored hatred against Iraqis. I told him: Never hate anyone. You may hate certain behavior or action, but not your fellowman. It is not right for anyone to hate his fellowman. Man was created by God in the best of moulds. God says: We have indeed created man in the best of moulds [koranic verse].

So, when we hate we should only hate an individual's actions, and even mentality if it is based on ill-will. But, it is not right to hate one's fellowman. Some of these ideas may be an overexaggerated view of forgiveness, but this is what we wish for ourselves and every Iraqi—forgiveness, but not the forgiveness that mixes things up. For example, it is not right under the motto of forgiveness to equate the brave, patriotic Iraqi struggler, who has endured the embargo, the resistance, etc. with another of different description. No, we must not make such a mistake. Every person must be given his due. Through forgiveness, we should give the one who errs and hurts the chance to mend his ways. We should always try to help him for his own sake first, and then for the sake of the environment and circumstances which made him deviate and err.

Hatred leads to the loss of wisdom. It is not right for an individual, especially when he is in a position of responsibility; be it union, a post of authority, or family, to lose his wisdom, because when he loses his wisdom, he will lose a great deal. Therefore, it is possible to pray to God to help our enemies for their own sake, even when we also pray to God take vengeance from the one who misbehaved toward us. Still, the call for forgiveness is the basis. If after forgiving him, an individual continues to be adamant and works against the current, action should be taken accordingly.

But the thing is, our country has gone through traumatic experiences. Individuals have been shaken up either by external factors or inherent factors weakness. Many feet have marched out of step, trains have been derailed, and those who have flown gone astray. The reason is that the event was larger than some people's capacity for absorption and greater than their ability to endure, and so they have been shaken up. For this reason, we are called upon to always forgive and show willingness to help those who seek guidance to the correct path. As I said, many were feet which marched out of step and the trains which got derailed and plunged into the precipices. The situation changed from one place to another, depending on the circumstances and concepts at the time.

But, can we possibly equate the one who took up arms, refused to be shaken up, and held to his position, with the one who went astray and then returned to the correct course? No. Prophet Muhammad, may the peace and blessings of God be upon him, and God Almighty, did not equate them. Thus, we understand that those who fought in Uhud were not the same as those who fought in Badr [Uhud and Badr were early Islam battles between believers and non-believers], that the Meccans who emigrated with the prophet to Medina were not the same as the Meccans who stayed behind, that the Meccans who emigrated to Medina were not the same as the Medina followers, etc.. Descriptions always differ, but these good ones marking the course of our history are acceptable to God Almighty with regard to both those who lost track and then resumed their course, and those who did not lose track. The end result was that their repentance and return was accepted. However, not all of them were equal in value and reward, neither in this world nor in the life hereafter as stated in the holy book.

Regarding our people in Kurdistan, we say that Iraq needs to heal their wounds with good words and thoughts. The main thing is what each one of us harbors internally for the future. What benefits us is forgiveness toward the one who has erred in his behavior or thoughts at the time, since the circumstances were difficult and complex. When our Lord Abraham, the first of the prophets, may peace be upon him, called for the one God, I do not think that the people in al-Sulaymaniyah said: This man came from Babylon, so we must not follow him. People only consider the one who does good and thinks right. There is always a difference between the clean and the unclean. Cleanliness begins from the heart and the soul and ends with behavior, just as uncleanliness begins from the heart and the soul and ends with behavior.

When Salah al-Din led the Arab and Muslim armies, nobody asked about his characteristics or birthplace. The whole of the Levant marched behind him and enabled him to influence events in the Arab Maghreb as well. Nobody said that Salah al-Din belonged to this or that area. The main thing is, who serves the people, the nation, and the firm principles governing people's aspirations and heritage. The main thing is loving the people spiritually and humanely, not artificially. We must not love our people in al-Sulaymaniyah so that when they come to the ballot boxes they will cast their votes in our favor. I have never believed in this kind of love. I do not believe in this kind of love.

I believe that a person must resort to his conscience when it comes to serving and loving his people, because he is part of these people. They are his people. He should love his people even when they err or fall sick. Naturally, he feels happy when the people are right and when they think, act, and hold together correctly.

We must love our people the way we love our fathers and mothers. Can you abandon your mother when she is sick? Can anyone abandon his father if he becomes hysterical at a certain stage in his life or errs? No. he will feel pain, sadness, etc., but he will not abandon his love for his father. This is the love we need for our people in Kurdistan, al-Basrah, al-Faw, Salah al-Din, Diyala, al- Najaf, and Karbala'. Unless it is this kind of love, it will be useless. Artificial love is useless. It will not advance and protect Iraq or uphold its high ideals in light of its historic position. This kind of love does not last. There are no politics without difficulties and problems. A single hardship could make a ruler abandon his love for his people, but there is a clear difference here between the ruler and the leader.

Love your people in the north when they are sick or well. Love your people in al-Basrah when they are sick or well. Love them also in Baghdad, Salah al-Din, and elsewhere. Give my regards to every Kurd you meet, or send my greetings to him. Tell them that we miss them.

Iraq: VP Ramadan on Husayn Kamil, UN Issues

MM1203155496 London AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI in Arabic 9-10 Mar 96 p 6

[Interview with Iraqi Vice President Taha Yasin Ramadan by Mahmud Ma'ruf and Jubran Khalil in Rabat; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI] Your Excellency Mr. Vice President. Within what framework does your current tour of the Arab Maghreb countries fall?

[Ramadan] As is known, Iraq's relations with the four countries of the Arab Maghreb that I have visited are normal and good. My present tour comes at an important stage since several important developments have taken place in the internal, Arab, and international arenas.

His excellency the president has asked me to put the leaders of these countries in the picture. This is because putting them in the picture will certainly enable them to find a way to help Iraq in their contacts with Arab and international quarters.

Furthermore, there are numerous matters, including even internal matters, that the Arab Maghreb leaders like to have information about, so that they may feel reassured about Iraq. These matters also include "the event" [the Kamil Husayn episode] about which you have written a great deal.

Anyway, we are aware that those who are far away from the scene of the event, irrespective of the degree of their remoteness, cannot put themselves in the picture about the event and its implications, as to whether the event has any humanitarian, social, cultural, or historical implications.

Let me now return to your question. The Iraqi leadership and his excellency the president believe that the leaders of the four Arab Maghreb countries possess special characteristics. For this reason, the president asked me to meet with the leaders of these countries to put them in the picture and also to reassure them about Iraq and listen to any questions they might have. The leaders of these countries and myself know each other personally, a fact which enables me to talk to them frankly and tell them of the difficult issues we are facing and the matters in which some improvement has been achieved.

In addition to that, and despite the fact that I did not consider it my basic political mission, I discussed with them the question of the activation of bilateral relations, whether publicly through the meetings of the joint committees or through trade exchange, despite the economic blockade. I also discussed a number of ideas for cooperation, as though the blockade had been lifted, so that these countries will have the precedence which they truly deserve in dealing with Iraq [once the blockade is lifted].

[AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI] Your tour coincides with a parallel tour which the minister of culture and information is paying to Yemen and Sudan. Do we understand from these tours that Iraq has begun to prepare itself for the post-blockade era?

[Ramadan] Since the very first day of the blockade, Iraq has been working along two parallel lines: one within the framework of internal building, working as if the blockade will remain for a very long time, and one within internal and external frameworks as if the blockade will be lifted tomorrow. This was the required course and it was the reason for our ability to survive until now. We continue to secure achievements, even if they do not match our ambitions. We will continue to draw up our internal and external program until the very moment when we are told that the blockade will be lifted tomorrow to this or that degree, for it is a question of steadfastness. The people who can stand fast are the ones who can win. Steadfastness does not mean staying motionless. Steadfastness coupled with interaction and the exploitation of every available opportunity can achieve something even if it is a mere iota.

[AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI] You have spoken lately about Iraq's readiness to show a greater measure of flexibility in its negotiations with the United Nations about the question of "oil for food." How far will Iraq go with this flexibility?

[Ramadan] The word dialogue and Iraq's acceptance of dialogue with the UN Security Council, which was the party that imposed the blockade, constitutes flexibility in itself. It is a dialogue without restrictions or conditions. Iraq has not imposed conditions on the Security Council nor did the Security Council or the UN secretary general impose any conditions on Iraq. Thus, there can be no desire for dialogue without readiness to exploit any opportunity that would enable the dialogue to reach a positive result. Acceptance of dialogue without such an outlook would be harmful.

In the same central vein, we can say that the positive indicators in the first round seemed more abundant. We hope the second round will provide a step forward.

We cannot say that we will definitely reach an agreement, since it depends on the will of two sides. But we hope an agreement will be reached. We are prepared to show flexibility as long as it does not infringe upon Iraq's sovereignty.

[AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI] Will this flexibility go as far as the recognition of Resolution 986?

[Ramadan] If we recognize Resolution 986, then why should we enter into dialogue? The resolution is there ready-made. The flexibility lies in the ideas we discuss to reach a mechanism that would satisfy all objectives, Iraq's and the other side's. The Iraqi objective is that nothing should detract from Iraq's sovereignty or territorial integrity. We would then approve of such a mechanism whatever its number [986 or not].

[AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI] Some time ago UN Secretary General Butrus Butrus-Ghali accused a rigid wing within the authorities in Iraq of obstructing agreement. Is Taha Yasin Ramadan considered one of the rigid ones?

[Ramadan] The leadership in Iraq is a national revolutionary one and has identical views and unified opinions on central objectives. We are not a liberal leadership nor a coalition party. We are the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party, and this [having a rigid wing] cannot apply to us. Had Iraq had a two-winged leadership, it would not have been able to continue to lead the battle in the fields of war, the economy, and peace. The [UN] secretary general can resort to all sorts of interpretations and expressions to facilitate his own task, and we have no objection to this.

[AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI] The second stage of negotiations will take place on 11 March. Are you optimistic about reaching a result?

[Ramadan] By God, if the same atmosphere that prevailed in the first round prevails in the second round, we will be more optimistic.

[AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI] Does this mean that you are satisfied with the results of the first round?

[Ramadan] Under the circumstances. The positive margins then were more abundant.

[AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI] You have talked about the most prominent "event." As we understand it, the most important event means the return of Husayn Kamil to Iraq and his assassination. Is that so?

[Ramadan] It was not the most prominent event, but you [the press] have made it so.

[AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI] Our question concerns the repercussions of this event on relations with Jordan.

[Ramadan] Let us be frank. This is not what concerns you. What concerns you is how did the Revolution Command Council issue a pardon to him and then kill him when he returned. You should have made a bit more effort, because this matter requires you to look for the facts and not rush things.

As to relations with Jordan, I believe no interest would be served by having tension develop in these relations. This is because our enemies are well known and our battle is not with any Arab country. On the contrary, we call for the normalization of relations with all Arab countries. You should go beyond that [the question of relations with Jordan].

During the first week of Husayn Kamil's defection, several countries and rulers said that Iraq was on the verge of collapse, on the grounds that the defector was not only a minister, but also had family ties with the president. From the very first day, he [Husayn Kamil] declared that he wanted to become president and he was supported in this regard by several quarters including the UN Security Council and Ekeus. Husayn Kamil's defection could be considered the biggest plot since 1991. But six months after his defection, all the dreams collapsed and Husayn Kamil returned to Iraq of his own volition. But this was not because his conscience had suddenly woken up but because all the analyses had said that it would all be over in a matter of days or weeks [after the defection].... But Iraq is internally strong. When a person possessing secrets and information departs and international — American and Israeli — forces as well as some well-known interested parties cooperate with him, this state of affairs is bound to have an effect. But the situation improved, as during the six months [of the defection] Iraq conducted the most famous plebiscite of its kind.

One other point. Not one single person in Iraq loved Husayn Kamil, indeed no one at all wished for his presence, for numerous reasons. I can say to you that when Husayn Kamil left Iraq the Iraqi people, those who did not feel decisive support for the leadership and those who are closest to the revolution, felt happy at Husayn Kamil's defection, despite the fact that his defection was a shock. What aroused concern, however, was the way he managed to leave taking with him the president's two daughters as part of his plan for psychological pressure and defamation. But this "failure" [Husayn Kamil], if we can use this expression, despite his closeness to Saddam Husayn, could not fathom what Saddam Husayn was.... Saddam Husayn would give his own eyes when the security of the country and the revolution are at stake.

You dealt with this man as though he was one of the opposition, when in fact he was a traitor. Yet the leadership was true in its decision to pardon him, though not because he deserved any such pardon. But our history shows that pardon is not a right that belongs to traitors. It is a right that belongs to those who err or lose their way, but not to those who sell their country and its destiny.

From the very first moment, Husayn Kamil handed his country over to Mosad and American intelligence. American intelligence did not show any interest in the Iraqi opposition, because the opposition had no roots. So they gambled on a Sunni officer from Tikrit who belonged to a well-known family. Husayn Kamil fitted the model which America had been drawing for two years. They tried the model but he failed.

We had issued an amnesty order for all returning plotters, granting exemption from trial if they return. But you must know the Iraqis' nature and consequently the nature of the social structure in Iraq. Husayn Kamil belonged to a family with a history. This family could no longer look people in the eyes, because Husayn Kamil was no ordinary conspirator. He had left and had surrendered the country to America and to Israel. For this reason, his family sent a cable on the second day of his defection declaring that his blood could be shed with impunity. A Westerner would not understand the meaning of this declaration, though I believe an Arab would. The only thing we decided in his case was to grant him pardon but not to accord him protection. This is because the man in the street in Iraq would not have accepted seeing the leadership provide Husayn Kamil with protection in addition to granting him a pardon despite the well-known fact that he was the cause of all that trouble for Iraq.... Our people did not condone the pardon, but they accepted it because of their confidence in the leadership. High treason is a crime punishable by all legislation, laws, and traditions.

[AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI] Would it not have been better for Iraq, which is internationally blockaded and is the subject of international criticism, to put Husayn Kamil on trial and pass the death sentence against him, thus saving itself all the criticism?

[Ramadan] We were serious in issuing our pardon because we wanted all plotters abroad to return to their homeland and abandon their plotting. Without such a pardon, they would not return. We could not pardon a person and then put him on trial. As to Husayn Kamil, the state had no say in the matter of his killing. It was the will of his family. But if you ask me if we knew he would be killed as soon as his feet touched Iraqi soil, I would say no. For during the two days he spent in Iraq, no Iraqi felt his presence.

I do not say that I do not care about world public opinion. But I say that our greater concern is about internal public opinion.

[AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI] Iraqi laws prohibit revenge. Are any legal proceedings being taken against those who perpetrated the attack on Husayn Kamil?

[Ramadan] After carrying out the operation, they sent a cable surrendering themselves and saying: We are ready for any legal accounting. But the leadership decided to pardon them, because what they did was not just a personal revenge such as a revenge for personal honor, it was a revenge for the Iraqi people in addition to being a personal revenge.

[AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI] What aroused public opinion was that the attack on Husayn Kamil also led to the killing of his father, his sister, and his nephews.

[Ramadan] When such an incident takes place, one cannot avoid causing other casualties. Husayn Kamil, his father, and his brothers were in his sister's house and his mother was there too. But it seems she left before the young men carried out their attack. According to the information we have received, attempts were made to take Husayn Kamil and his brother out alone, so that they could be killed outside the house. But resistance was offered. It was because of this that the two young men, Ahmad and Tha'ir [two of the assailants], were killed.

Sometimes, people perform actions they do not wish to perform. Perhaps if their wives, the president's daughters, had been in the house, they would have been killed too. Kamil Husayn used the two daughters when he defected, using them as a shield to hide behind when he returned. But they left him as soon as they arrived at the border post.

As regards his father, I wish to point out that he was the only one who did not feel displeased at Husayn Kamil's flight and he did not sign the cable that allowed the shedding of Kamil's blood which was signed by the family. Indeed, he was in sympathy with his son. We were aware that he used to visit him when he was in Amman. We knew that the weapon that was in the house and which was used in fighting off the young men, was brought by the father.

[AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI] There is still some mystery concerning the Husayn Kamil's wife and his brother's wife and their defection. There is now some mystery about the fate of their children.

[Ramadan] With regard to the children, they were moved together with their mothers immediately upon their entry into Iraqi territory. But as to their departure, the truth about coercion is evident. It is not necessary for us to reveal the details.

When Iraq learnt that the president's two daughters [were in Jordan], on the day we saw Husayn Kamil on television — the second day of his defection — and we knew that they were not going to Bulgaria as they had been told, I asked King Husayn's daughters to ask him to arrange for their return to Iraq. But this did not happen. We continued to ask for this throughout the six months. I have mentioned the names of the king's daughters whom I asked to do this. I cannot say any more than this about this matter. This is because when we raised this Jordan was annoyed. He [not further identified] used to say that the two daughters were in their uncle's house. But how could the two girls come and stay for six months in their uncle's house and yet not see him?!

[AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI] Everybody has been interested during the past few weeks in the "oil for food" negotiations. But what about the blockade?

[Ramadan] It is Resolution 987 that governs mutual commitments between Iraq and the UN Security Council. This resolution contains commitments which Iraq has to fulfill. It also contains commitments which the Security Council has to fulfill. Thus there are two reciprocal commitments. The first commitment concerns Iraq's destruction of the mass destruction weapons in its possession. Once Iraq completes this task, the Security Council has to implement paragraph 22 of the resolution which concerns Iraq's exportation of its oil and other exports and the importation of food, medicine, and other means of subsistence.

We are convinced that Iraq has implemented all that it has to. This obligates the Security Council to implement its commitments. As you may remember, toward the end of July and the beginning of August 1995 we specified the date of the lifting of the blockade, because the Iraq commitment was clear. But then came the Husayn Kamil issue and the dossiers were opened anew.

Now that we have gone beyond the episode of Husayn Kamil and his dossier, the forthcoming stage must witness radical charges in regard to this matter, that is, the UN Security Council should carry out its commitments toward Iraq. Even in our dialogue over the question of oil for food, there is a clear paragraph which states that any agreement reached in regard to this question should neither substitute nor impede the implementation of paragraph 22 of resolution 687 [as published]. This is our right. So in my talks with leaders of the Arab Maghreb region, we requested them and expressed hopes that they would not let any agreement on the question of oil for food affect their political efforts with regard to the demand for lifting the blockade on Iraq.

[AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI] Are you hopeful about the realization of this in the near future?

[Ramadan] God willing, since there is no longer any legal justification for the continuation of the blockade.

[AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI] But the question of the missing Kuwaitis is still pressing?

[Ramadan] This question, like many other questions, is an unfounded issue, they only raise it to prolong the blockade. There are no prisoners of war. Had there been some, after all these years they would have turned to (vinegar) [dust]. Everybody knows there are no prisoners of war and they know that the Iraqi leadership is not immature and irresponsible to the degree of exposing 20 million people to danger for the sake of a group of prisoners of war. Any mature person, even if he was not familiar with Iraq, would scoff at this question and realize that raising the issue is part of a directed campaign, so that when matters mature, all the cards would fall down, because those who are raising the question of the missing persons are acting in accordance with directions from their master. Once this master happens to feel gracious, they will stop raising the matter.

[AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI] How do you envisage your future relations with Kuwait?

[Ramadan] Ask the Kuwaitis.

[AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI] Let us be more specific. Could you accept dealing with Kuwait as a sister country and a neighbor?

[Ramadan] We have clearly declared our readiness to normalize our relations with all the Arab countries without exception.

[AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI] And with Saudi Arabia as well?

[Ramadan] Does Saudi Arabia fall outside the Arab map?

[AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI] It was announced that 34 American aircraft were sent to Jordan. Does Iraq constitute a threat to Jordan?

[Ramadan] Iraq does not pose a threat to Jordan nor do these planes pose a threat to Iraq. We are happy to see the United States giving planes to Jordan even if it is 100 planes.

[AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI] Iraqi Oil Minister 'Amir al-Rashid went to Turkey via the north of Iraq. Has this route become a substitute for the Baghdad-Amman route and are there any fears of Jordan resorting to closing its borders with you?

[Ramadan] It is not a question of an alternative. Baghdad-Amman is one route and there are opportunities for other routes. Is Iraq required to use one route only? Why should there not be scores of routes?

[AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI] Is the Baghdad-Damascus route one of these routes?

[Ramadan] Why not? God willing, it will be. On our part, we have no objection to this.

[AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI] There are reports about Algerian efforts to bring about an Iraqi-Syrian rapprochement and that the earth barricades at Abu-al-Shamat post have been removed. Is this true?

[Ramadan] The brothers in Algeria have not raised this matter with me. The Syrian-Iraqi borders continue as they were. When Louis Farrakhan [of the U.S. Nation of Islam] crossed them, he had to climb over these earth barricades. In principle, we have no objection to rapprochement with Syria, because when the leadership approves a principle, implementation becomes a matter of detail that is free from all ambiguity. I am armed with a decision to normalize relations with all the Arab countries. I am now in Morocco. So if, for example, King Hassan II or any other Moroccan official comes unexpectedly to me saying that there is a Syrian official here who wants to meet with you and talk to you about the question of the normalization of relations, I would not say I have to consult Baghdad first to find out if it agrees or not. On the contrary, I would meet with the Syrian official and talk to him. This is because the leadership has already approved the principle of normalization.

We believe that dialogue and the establishment and perpetuation of relations is a natural matter. Estrangement is the exception. Even if differences of opinion exist, does this mean that countries should become estranged? Hence the dialogues, because normalization comes through dialogue.

Once more I reiterate that we have no objection to the normalization of relations with Syria. We are now in the process of coordinating stances toward Turkey with regard to the Euphrates water. Likewise, we have no objection to any Arab country seeking to bring about a dialogue and normalization between us and Syria.

[AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI] What about Egyptian-Iraqi relations?

[Ramadan] There is nothing new in regard to these relations. We always hope that these relations will be better for the sake of the interest of Egypt, Iraq, and the Arab nation.

[AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI] Husayn Kamil's defection and later his assassination placed your friends at the UN Security Council in an embarrassing situation.

[Ramadan] Husayn Kamil's death is not the problem. The embarrassment and the problem lie in his defection. Because it was not easy for them to see a senior Iraqi Government official say that Iraq has failed to honor its commitments toward the UN Security Council and has failed to provide all the information asked for, at a time when they [Iraq's friends] were calling for the implementation of paragraph 22 of Resolution 687 [as published], so they kept silent and even their tone changed and became different from what it used to be prior to the defection. When we asked them about the reason for this, they said that they were shocked. However, they also said that they will wait and see. Now that it has become evident that most of the information he [Husayn Kamil] divulged was of no significance and the UN committees including the nuclear weapons committee have affirmed that it was of no significance and does not change the essence of the previous [UN] evaluation, we believe the friends' position has changed, though we realize that, unfortunately, Rolf Ekeus acted differently. He wanted to use Husayn Kamil as a means of prolonging the blockade. This was evident, otherwise what is the significance of and justification for his traveling via Amman to meet with Husayn Kamil every time he visited Baghdad? Of course, Ekeus was acting on instructions from the United States.

[AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI] It is clear that Iraq is not happy with Ekeus.

[Ramadan] The question is not one of being happy or not. We are confident that Iraq has cooperated with Ekeus to a maximum degree to facilitate his mission. Indeed, he himself has stated this on numerous occasions. This is only logical, for had Iraq not cooperated with Ekeus, what could he have done, how would he have been able to do all that he has done. Besides, monitoring constitutes the most important part of the operation, because acceptance of monitoring eliminates all fears about what is or is not there. But Ekeus did not reciprocate in the same spirit. We hope this unfortunate behavior on his part will pass.

[AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI] If the oil for food negotiations succeed, do you expect a new initiative from your friends at the Security Council (Russia, France, and China), particularly as they were the ones that encouraged you to enter into these negotiations?

[Ramadan] There was no encouragement. They were people who felt sympathetic to us and their views did not conflict with our views and our position. The success of the negotiations is not certain. They might succeed and they might not. As to the necessary initiative by the friends, that is a matter for them and it is not for us to talk about it.

[AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI] Your relations with Iran seem unstable.

[Ramadan] In fact, Iran does not seem serious in this respect so far. I do not say that the present relations are so bad as to be disturbing, nor so good as to be useful. Anyway, we hope they will improve.

[AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI] Washington's policy of double containment toward the countries make it imperative for them to cooperate with each other.

[Ramadan] Logic says that, and many people also say it. As far as we are concerned, we are always ready to accept any vision of positive relations with Iran.

[AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI] You have excluded Mauritania from your tour of the Arab Maghreb region. Has this anything to do with what happened a few months ago?

[Ramadan] True, Mauritania adopted an unethical attitude toward Iraq and leveled false accusations at it, as evident from the fact that the court declared the falsehood of these accusations. Iraq had nothing to do with those who were put on trial and who were all Mauritanians. Mauritania has accused Iraq of spying on it. Are we likely to spy on them? Every Arab was aware of the triviality of these accusations, as was affirmed also by the court which was formed by the Mauritanian Government and which acquitted those who were accused of spying and said that they had no connection with Iraq, whose ambassador was expelled by the Mauritanian Government within a mere two hours. What would you expect us to do then?

[AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI] You are approaching legislative elections. Do you expect the same degree of participation as was the case in regard to the plebiscite?

[Ramadan] The large-scale participation in the presidential plebiscite was a phenomenon which I believe had no parallel. People rushed to the booths accompanied by their children donned in festive clothing. This was a real challenge [to the opponents of the regime]. The leadership was not convinced of the soundness of holding a plebiscite because the country was passing through war conditions and no country would hold a presidential plebiscite or elections under war conditions. But the president insisted on holding the plebiscite.

I do not believe participation in the legislative elections would be on the same scale, though it is going to be of a good degree. The legislative elections are important because the parliament will have new powers in accordance with the new law. Furthermore, the candidates have embarked on large-scale active campaigning.

[AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI] Will the elections be held on the basis of partisan plurality?

[Ramadan] God willing.

[AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI] Will there be different colors of parties in the national assembly?

[Ramadan] We cannot say parties of different colors, because this would mean the existence of parties with cadres, and there is no such thing now. There will be, however, a wide margin for those who do not belong to the Ba'th Party, because the party has not put forward candidates for all seats, thus leaving room for independents.

[AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI] What about the northern regions' seats?

[Ramadan] Most likely, we will renew the membership of those who were previously elected from the autonomous rule region. No decree has been issued in this regard so far. However, it is an idea that could be implemented after the completion of the elections.

[AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI] Are there any new developments in regard to contacts with the Kurdish parties?

[Ramadan] No, there is nothing new, because the matter involves numerous factors.

[AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI] Will there be any guarantees for the oil pipeline after the issuance of the decision on the exportation of Iraqi oil?

[Ramadan] There is no problem. When the oil export decision is issued, oil will flow "like roses" [smoothly].

[AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI] The Iraqi dinar has made unexpected gains following the announcement of acceptance of the oil for food negotiations, has it not?

[Ramadan] This is because before that, the value of the dinar was not real and was not compatible with inflation, despite what the country has endured during the past six years. Had inflation been as it was depicted, the price of the dinar would not have risen in the manner it did. The drop in its value previously was not due to any inflation but due to plotting, propaganda, and rumors. Thus at the first opportunity the dinar made progress. We do not say that we have not taken some measures to improve its value, but the measures we have taken and which form part of our program, do not have the capability to raise the dinar rate of exchange in this manner. Consequently, I wish to affirm that if we were to announce tomorrow the reaching of an agreement and even before one single barrel of oil was exported and before we earn a single dollar, the dinar rate of exchange will rise from 350 to 50 dinars to the dollar.

The Iraqi economy is strong and the Iraqi dinar has strong foundations to rely upon. We must not view it as being like the Brazilian currency or the currencies of some other countries. The economic pillars of the dinar are still there and the aggression has not diminished any of their sources of strength, because the aggression and the blockade have not changed Iraq's oil and mineral reserves or reduced Iraq's agricultural area or the capability of the Iraqis. On the contrary, the blockade has helped to widen the crop growing areas and to develop Iraq's technical capabilities.

[AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI] But citizens are afraid that their salaries might drop?

[Ramadan] No, we will not reduce salaries, because we are not happy with the present scale of salaries when the dollar rate of exchange reached 350 dinars. The Iraq citizen has suffered much, and we are trying to alleviate his suffering. We felt happy when the situation improved following the rise in the rate of the dinar. If the citizen happens to gain two more fils, we do not plan to take it from him.

[AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI] Taha Yasin Ramadan, the vice president and the citizen who toured Baghdad and other Iraqi cities following the cease-fire in 1991 and saw all the devastation that took place in the past and now witnesses the reconstruction operation: Does he feel surprised?

[Ramadan] I cannot give any precise or specific expression. But I can say that rarely has such devastating aggression ever been launched against any country other than Iraq, a country which had mounted a large-scale development operation over a period of 25 years, financed by all its resources, only to have all that demolished by aggression. Then following the devastation came the blockade which prevented us from exporting our oil and other resources. However, after all that, we have to embark on reconstruction — in which foreign companies' participation amounts to 80 percent — using national Iraqi expertise under difficult psychological conditions. As an Iraqi, I say that I was not surprised by this achievement bur rather admire it. For the Iraqi citizen was not content to reconstruct what was devastated but also completed many other new projects.

All this is natural for a country with Iraq's structure, nature, and history. Palestine was liberated twice in history and both liberations came from Iraq. Iraq was devastated more than once and it was rebuilt by the hands of its sons. Hence it is not strange to see Iraq still standing after 42 days of aggression in which 33 countries participated including the world's biggest countries and after an unjust aggressive blockade.

What Iraq has witnessed during the two years following the aggression makes me as an Iraqi citizen an admirer and as a responsible official a happy man. Furthermore, it makes me have more confidence in my belief and in my people, those people who will rise with greater capability and power than I used to see prior to 1991.

Iraq: Husayn Kamil's Family Property Reported Confiscated

LD1203204496 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic
1648 GMT 12 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Tehran, 12 March — An Iraqi opposition organization said today that the head of the Iraqi regime had ordered the confiscation of all the property of Kamil Hasan al-Majid, the father of Husayn, Saddam, and Hakim who were killed with their families after the return of the former Iraqi industry minister, Husayn Kamil, from his voluntary exile in Jordan.

The Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq [SAIRI] said in a statement issued from its headquarters here that the confiscation order included the property of Kamil al-Majid and his sons and daughters, in addition to tens of people connected with family or commercial relationships with Kamil al-Majid's family.

It revealed that the attack operation which targeted the house in which Husayn Kamil was living after his return, which belonged to his sister in the al-Saydiyah suburb in Baghdad, involved the encirclement of the house by elements under the command of 'Udayy Saddam Husayn which evacuated the neighboring houses and blocked all the roads leading to the aforementioned house.

It pointed out that the attack started at five o'clock in the morning [0200 GMT] where violent clashes took place between the two sides in which light weapons and "RPG" launchers were used, a matter which led to the killing of all the residents of the house; those were: Kamil Hasan al-Majid and his sons and daughters, in addition to the children.

It said that the attack had led to the killing of Salman Majid and his two sons, Ra'id and Tha'ir, and Ghafur Majid and his son Ahmad, an officer, in addition to Sultan Majid, who were from the attackers.

It added that the clashes which took place in al-Hawijah district, of Kirkuk, immediately after the killing of Husayn Kamil, were the reasons behind the escape of Fadil Kamil, Husayn Kamil's brother, to the aforementioned district, and his refuge to the al-Sinn [as received] tribe which, together with al-Jubur tribe, refused to hand him over to the authorities, a matter which led to the occurrence of those clashes.

It pointed out that kidnapping and arrest operations had reached some figures close to Barzan al-Takriti, Saddam Husayn's half brother.

Iraq: Source Reiterates 'All' Kuwaiti Prisoners Released

JN1203171996 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1538 GMT 12 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 12 Mar (INA)—An official source at the Foreign Ministry today reacted to the allegations made by Salim al-Sabah, official in charge of the file of missing Kuwaitis.

In a statement, the source said that the allegations included in the Kuwaiti official's statements are not new, and that this person is reiterating the same lies about the issue of missing persons. Once again, Iraq reiterates that all Kuwaiti POW's, detainees, and others, totalling 11,000, have been released according to Resolution 686 of 1991.

In this context, the source indicated, Iraq reaffirms that it does not keep any POW of any nationality. The source indicated that Iraq is doing its utmost to investigate the fate of missing Kuwaitis. During their continued periodic and monthly meetings since their formation in 1995, the tripartite commission and the technical subcommission concerned with the fate of missing Kuwaitis succeeded in settling many cases.

The source added: Salim al-Sabah was present at the 4 March 1996 Geneva meeting, which was also attended by Iraqi officials. He knows very well that at the aforementioned meeting an agreement was reached to close the file of another missing person whose remains had been handed over by Iraqi authorities to Kuwaiti authorities. Thus, the number of persons whom Kuwait claims to have been considered missing during the war becomes 602. Iraqi authorities are exerting continuous efforts to explore their destiny.

Concluding his statement, the source stressed that the Kuwaiti official is not interested in resolving the issue of missing Kuwaitis and that he is using it for known political purposes. He seeks to justify the continuation of the unjust blockade against Iraq. Contrary to all his pledges during the tripartite committee's meetings, which were headed by the International Committee of the Red Cross, he broke his pledge not to use this issue for political purposes and to only focus on the humanitarian issue.

Iraq, UN Delegations Meet for Oil-for-Food Talks

JN1303081196 Baghdad Iraq Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 12 Mar 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] Delegations from Iraq and the UN General Secretariat on Monday [11 March] evening held another session of talks within the context of the second round of the dialogue on oil for food and other basic needs.

It was announced at the UN headquarters yesterday that during this evening session, the two parties continued discussion of the issues that were not resolved during the first round of the dialogue.

The IRAQI NEWS AGENCY correspondent in New York learned that the two delegations will hold a third general session of talks in the second round of the dialogue at 1500 New York time, today Tuesday, 2300 Baghdad time.

Experts from Iraq and the United Nations held a meeting in New York this morning to discuss some technical matters related to the issue of oil for food, medicine, and other basic needs. Trade, health, oil, and industry experts from both sides participated in these discussions to prepare for the third general session of the second round of the dialogue between Iraq and the United Nations.

Iraq, UN Delegations Hold 2d Round of Oil-for-Food Talks

JN1303081996 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0705 GMT 13 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] New York, 13 Mar (INA)—Iraqi and UN delegations late last night held a working session within the context of the second round of dialogue over the issue of oil for food, medicine, and other basic needs of the Iraqi people.

The INA correspondent in New York learned that the two delegations agreed to resume meetings this morning.

The United Nations had earlier announced that the two delegations would discuss in these sessions the issues remaining from the first round of talks, which ended on 19 February.

Israel: Peres Views Summit Decision on Antiterror 'Mechanisms'

TA1203200796 Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 12 Mar 96

[Political correspondent 'Imanu'el Rosen video report — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Rosen] Prime Minister Shim'on Peres told Channel 2 Television today that at the conclusion of the Sharm al-Shaykh summit a decision will be reached to establish mechanisms for international cooperation against terrorism. Contacts on formulating the joint statement that will close the summit will continue until the very last moment.

This morning, Prime Minister Shim'on Peres finished writing the impassioned speech he will make tomorrow at the Sharm al-Shaykh summit. I wanted to speak on behalf of my people who seek peace; however, here today I must first of all speak with sorrow and pain in the name of children, women, and elderly people who were the victims of vicious terrorism. Almost all activity at the prime minister's bureau today centered on preparations for the summit. Itamar Rabinovich, Israel's ambassador to Washington, arrived to give a briefing on the contacts with U.S. officials. Foreign Minister Baraq returned from a lightning visit to Amman in order to report on tough positions presented by Crown Prince Hasan. Jordan is demanding that the summit name specific names and point an accusing finger at Iran, Syria, and Lebanon. [passage omitted]

At this time, it remains unclear how the most important clause on the forming of joint mechanisms for cooperation against terrorism will be phrased. Everyone is convinced that such a clause will appear.

[Peres] It deals with bank accounts, arms supplies, and international cooperation. There are many practical aspects. Later on, we will discuss the matter further and establish a follow-up group for all this. [passage omitted]

[Foreign Ministry Director General Uri Savir] Today, both the Americans and the Egyptians told us they shared our interest that this conference should be followed up by an organized struggle against terrorism.

[Rosen] According to reports, 'Arafat is very close to arresting Muhammad Dayf in the Gaza Strip. Shim'on Peres is optimistic. People here are saying that the color has returned to his cheeks.

There have also been a series of diplomatic incidents prior to Clinton's visit to Israel. Here are just three examples of many: First of all, the visit by Egyptian envoy Usamah al-Baz. This is proof of a diplomatic incident with Egypt. Al-Baz came to apologize for remarks made by the Egyptian foreign minister, who said that the Sharm al-Shaykh summit should issue a condemnation of Israel. Nevertheless, we heard that al-Baz' demands were rejected. That, however, pales in comparison to the wars among the Jews. [passage omitted]

The climax came when President 'Ezer Weizman announced that he would boycott President Clinton's reception at Ben-Gurion Airport. All this because, in contravention of custom and the rules of protocol, Clinton refused to hold the reception ceremony at the presidential residence in Jerusalem.

Israel: Beilin on al-Asad Failure To Attend Sharm al-Shaykh Summit

BR1303123196 Rome L'UNITA in Italian 13 Mar 96 p 13

[Interview with Israeli Government Minister Yosi Beilin by Umberto de Giovannangeli in Jerusalem; date not given: "Syria Is Staying Away, al-Asad Is Unreliable" — first paragraph is L'UNITA introduction]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] "Syria's decision is disappointing and worrying; by refusing to attend the Sharm al-Shaykh conference, Damascus is automatically placing itself on the other side from the antiterrorism coalition. And this stance cannot fail to have negative repercussions on the bilateral negotiations themselves," Yosi Beilin, the Israeli Government's number two, maintains. [passage omitted]

[De Giovannangeli] The eve of the international conference against terrorism has been marked by disputes and contrasting statements. It is regarded in some quarters as an opportunity to make operational decisions, whereas it is dismissed in others as a mere symboliic demonstration. What are Israel's expectations?

[Beilin] While I agree that decisions that will enter into immediate operational force cannot be reached at the summit itself, this by no means diminishes its importance, because the idea is that the summit should launch a long-term policy of coordination and cooperation. The main thing is that a common conviction shared by all the participants should emerge from Sharm al-Shaykh, the conviction that terrorism is an international problem and must thus be fought internationally. There can be no delegating, because if the Middle East powder keg goes up, the devastating fallout will descend on the whole international scene.

[De Giovannangeli] And what is Syria's line on this endeavor?

[Beilin] Of course, Syria's decision is disappointing and worrying. By boycotting the summit, Damascus is placing itself on the other side from the antiterrorism coalition. Its request for another Madrid conference to be convened is nothing but an attempt to divert attention from the real problem facing us: terrorism, which can wreck the whole peace process. I have no doubt that this summit is the right idea at the right time. I would add that, by staying away, Syria is in danger of jeopardizing the diplomatic efforts that have made it possible to resume bilateral negotiations. I have been convinced for a long time that overall, lasting peace in the Middle East necessarily requires a settlement between Israel and Syria. We have said repeatedly that peace with Damascus will entail painful territorial concessions on Israel's part. In exchange, we have asked President al-Asad for concrete deeds moving in the direction of dialogue, particularly as far as Israel's security is concerned.

[De Giovannangeli] But?

[Beilin] But the attacks by the Lebanese hizballah against the villages in Upper Galilee have continued, despite the fact that there are over 40,000 Syrian troops stationed in Lebanon. Asad is mistaken if he thinks that keeping the threat of terrorism alive along our borders will give him more cards to play at the negotiating table. It is enough to wreck any negotiations. Moreover, the silence maintained on certain occasions is in danger of opening up unbridgeable chasms between the two peoples. In Israel, 57 defenseless citizens have been massacred in two weeks, many of them women and children. Not a single voice has been raised in Syria to condemn these massacres, nor has a word of sympathy for the victims been uttered. This silence has shocked Israel and deprived Hafiz al-Asad of credibility as a peace negotiator.

[De Giovannangeli] Is 'Arafat still to be regarded as your partner in the military scenario that the fight against Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] terrorism entails?

[Beilin] He undoubtedly is; what is more, there is really no other potential partner among the Palestinians. Indeed, I think that the Palestinian Authority is at last beginning to realize that Hamas is a threat to us both and gives even greater grounds for joint action: While this organization's main aim is to kill as many Israelis as possible and, with them, the entire peace process, another of its prime goals is to destabilize 'Arafat's pragmatic, lay regime. This is why it is our duty to join forces to create a coalition against fanaticism and terrorism in this part of the world.

[De ~~Gio~~vannangeli] The Israeli Right continues to accuse the government of giving in to the Palestinians and of being incapable of countering the threat posed by Hamas.

[Beilin] And what is Netanyahu's winning proposal supposed to be? Invading Gaza, reoccupying the West Bank? No one has fathomed it out, because the Right is incapable of progressing beyond the demagoguery and cinicism of those who think they can make political capital and win votes by raising the level of fear and insecurity among the public.

[De Giovannangeli] So will the pessimists who regarded the peace process as done for a few days ago have to eat their words?

[Beilin] I have never regarded the peace process as dead, indeed I am sure that it will go on. We certainly must not give the enemies of peace, who, in the ultimate analysis, are nothing less than the enemies of humanity, that satisfaction.

Israel: Clinton, Peres To Discuss Resuming Talks With Syria

TA1203180796 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1700 GMT 12 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Ministry Director General Uri Savir told our correspondent Pe'erli Shahar that Prime Minister Shim'on Peres and U.S. President Bill Clinton will tomorrow evening discuss the conditions for resuming the negotiations with Syria. Savir said that Secretary of State Christopher will remain in Israel an additional day in order to pursue talks on this matter. CIA Director John Deutch will also attend additional discussions in Israel.

Israel: 'Warnings' Issued on Hamas Plans To 'Disrupt' Clinton Visit

TA1203154896 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1500 GMT 12 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Police Commissioner Asaf Hefetz said that the Israel Police have received many warnings about Hamas' [Islamic Resistance Movement] plans to carry out terrorist attacks in an attempt to disrupt President Clinton's visit to Israel; however, the warnings were of a general and unspecific nature.

Our police affairs correspondent Aviv Bushinsky reports that 10,000 policemen will secure Clinton's visit. Many roads will be closed to traffic, and cars parking along the route of the presidential entourage will be towed away. The police commissioner said that the police would not permit any demonstrations during Clinton's two-day visit to Israel.

Israel: Baraq on Amman Talks; Egypt's al-Baz Visits

TA1203140096 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1105 GMT 12 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Usamah al-Baz, the Egyptian president's adviser, arrived on an unplanned visit this morning and is now meeting with Prime Minister Shim'on Peres. His visit is apparently due to difficulties in the drafting of the Sharm al-Shaykh summit's concluding statement, to which the Egyptians want to add a clause implicitly condemning Israeli aggression. Our political correspondent Shlomo Raz reports:

[Raz] The visit was the Egyptians' idea. Egypt is emphasizing the summit's commitment to the peace process, rather than the antiterror efforts, which Israel and the United States view as the highlight of the conference.

I have just returned from Amman, where Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq held talks with Crown Prince Hasan and Prime Minister al-Kabariti. Despite the kudos Israel has been lavishing on the Jordanians' handling of terror, the Jordanians are also seeking more subtle formulations on the disputed points of the concluding statement. It is in this context that Usamah al-Baz is now meeting with Shim'on Peres at the Egyptians' request. In any event, everything will be examined under the Americans' microscope, as they are the real leaders of the conference. Although it is being held on Egyptian soil, the United States is the dominant, leading, most serious element in this entire endeavor.

The terror issue was the main concern of Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq's brief visit to Amman. Beyond the desire to share information with the Jordanians and let them feel a part of this enterprise, the visit had another very important angle. The gist of it is that Foreign Minister Baraq was accompanied by several members of what I will call the Israeli intelligence establishment, representatives of various Israeli intelligence branches. They briefed Crown Prince Hasan and Prime Minister al-Kabariti on Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] activities in various locations, including Jordan. There are indications that the Israeli-Jordanian cooperation in counterterror issues is good. Here is what Crown Prince Hasan said:

[Begin Hasan recording, in English] The peace treaty with Israel, committed as it is against acts of terror, and in detail committed as it is to the maintenance of both current and basic security. [sentence as heard] [end recording]

[Raz] Some positively authoritative Israeli elements said that Jordan is taking determined action against Islamic terror. I have even learned that a high-ranking security personality from Jordan made a secret visit to Israel yesterday.

As soon as the plane landed we asked Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq whether Israel is satisfied with Jordan's actions against Hamas terror:

[Begin recording] [Baraq] Israel takes a very favorable view of the way Jordan has been acting very responsibly, thoroughly, and seriously against terror in the wake of the peace agreement, and in a sense, even before the agreement. There is an ongoing dialogue, and although both Jordan and Israel have had occasional difficulties, the issue is handled very seriously, responsibly, and thoroughly on the whole.

[Raz] 'Arafat has said openly that the financing of Hamas in the territories came from Jordan, and I believe that there are Hamas headquarters in Amman.

[Baraq] In a sense, this is an incomplete and misleading description of the situation. The recent chain of events was traced back to the Gaza Strip. It was initiated and steered from Gaza; it was organized and people were trained in and sent to action from Ramallah. There are additional elements encouraging terror in the Middle East. There are terror commands operating freely in Damascus; there are terrorist elements still operating from Libya; and there is naturally the mother of all sources of terror — Iran. Jordan is definitely not a member of this gang. It is a part of a body of countries that deal with extremism amid considerable difficulties and, as I have said, it has been taking very comprehensive and very responsible action to quash these phenomena.

[Raz] What do you and the Government of Israel expect of the Sharm al-Shaykh summit specifically?

[Baraq] Beyond the political and symbolic momentum the war on terror will assume as a result of the attendance of world leaders and, no less significantly, of Middle East and North African leaders, with leaders of Arab and Muslim states openly endorsing the antiterror struggle, I expect it to reach concrete conclusions pertaining to the establishment of cooperation apparatuses. I expect the establishment of a follow-up committee on a ministerial or some other level that will convene periodically to make sure that the counterterror coordination steps — gathering intelligence, monitoring funds transfers, monitoring terrorists' communications, sharing information on antiterror technologies, and eventually even undertaking legislative moves to facilitate the counterterror drive — are implemented. [end recording]

Israel: Peres—'Arafat 'Crossed the Rubicon' in Antiterror War

TA1303091096 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0815 GMT 13 Mar 96

[Report by political correspondent Shlomo Raz in Sharm al-Shaykh]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Speaking with reporters during the flight to Sharm al-Shaykh this morning, Prime Minister Shim'on Peres stated that 'Arafat has crossed the Rubicon. Peres meant that Palestinian Authority [PA] Chairman Yasir 'Arafat is seriously combating terror and acting on the Israeli demands much more satisfactorily. Here is a recording of Peres' remarks:

[Begin Peres recording] The PA has detained the No. 2 fugitive, and they seem to have detained 12 out of the 30 wanted men on the list we gave them. They have seized caches of explosives. They are evidently hunting for fugitive No. 1. They too are under pressure, but they have crossed the Rubicon, there is no doubt about that.

The other thing to do is to arouse the world against terror, which enjoys international resources and has networks throughout the world. For the first time European foreign ministers met to send a somewhat menacing message to Iran. For the first time Gulf states have said the anti-Israel boycott should end. [end recording] [passage omitted]

The prime minister said Syria is in an embarrassing situation, and that it made a mistake in deciding not to come to the summit.

Implicitly criticizing President Weizman, the prime minister voiced his surprise at the president's decision not to come to Ben-Gurion Airport either to receive or see off President Clinton. Shim'on Peres asked: In what way is this different from 1994, when President Clinton came for a visit and was received by President Weizman at the same airport? [passage omitted]

The prime minister dismissed the Likud charge that the summit was designed to promote Shim'on Peres' political cause. He said that the fact that the United States is taking his side only flatters him, and he had nothing further to say about that. [passage omitted]

Israel: Intelligence Officer Briefs Knesset on PA Performance

TA1203151496 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1105 GMT 12 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Brigadier General Ya'aqov 'Amidror, head of the Intelligence Branch's Research Department, says the Palestinian Authority [PA] has not done enough to fight the terrorist organizations. His remarks are included in a document 'Amidror sent to the U.S. Congress' Foreign Affairs Committee. Our correspondent Yo'el Nir reports on Gen. 'Amidror's appearance before the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee this morning.

[Nir] You could say that this time, too, 'Amidror delivered the goods since his remarks were somewhat surprising both to the opposition and the coalition.

He quoted before the Knesset committee from the document he sent a few days ago to the U.S. Congress as follows: The PA has not done enough to fight the terrorist organizations. 'Arafat can do it, since he enjoys public support in the wake of the elections. He has strong security mechanisms, and this would also be in his interest, but judging by the results in the field, it is not clear that he has made up his mind to cross the Rubicon. Some possible reasons for it is that 'Arafat does not regard terror as a moral problem, but as a political one. He does not see himself helping Israel, beyond attempting to stop attacks. He perceives a bloodbath in Palestinian society worse than terror on Israeli soil. Nevertheless, in anticipation of the Sharm al-Shaykh conference, the PA has made attempts to stop senior operatives. Why did they wait until the last minute? How long will they persevere? There are no answers. Do we have the right to demand that the Palestinians fight terror? The answer is yes, not to mention the fact that there is a contractual commitment to this effect.

'Amidror continued: 'Arafat has done virtually nothing to fight the infrastructure. This is not just a policy of the last few years, but a concept. Only in early 1995, when Rabin forced him to make a choice, did he take some action, as it were. In practice, all those who were arrested were let go. So much for 'Amidror's quotes from his letter to the U.S. Congress.

He then went on to tell the Knesset committee that Yahya 'Ayyash, alias The Engineer, was eliminated, but that before that, he had managed to prepare the infrastructure for the murderous attacks. At the same time, 'Arafat denied that he was in Gaza, while all the bombs were assembled in Gaza.

Referring to the Sharm al-Shaykh conference, 'Amidror said: On the one hand, bringing Arab countries that have never taken part in a debate on the terror issue is a very big achievement. On the other hand, however, it switches the spotlight from the terror to the peace negotiations. The resolutions that will be adopted will be totally toothless, 'Amidror said, and if anybody expects some practical results, then he is being naive. Nevertheless, 'Arafat can use the conference as a political shield, and that is why he stepped up the arrests.

It is hard to tell whether his resolve is temporary and will only last for the duration of the conference or he has really crossed the Rubicon. Obviously, it is easier for him to appear resolved when he has a political shield.

'Amidror added: In the last 72 hours the PA arrested people it had never detained before, such as senior political figures and terrorists. The PA even went into mosques, seized weapons, and destroyed infrastructures. Its activities in recent days have exceeded what it had done in the past, which proves what we have been arguing all along, that 'Arafat can but does not want to do it.

He noted that the closure eases the work for 'Arafat and Israel. There is no hunger in the territories yet, but it could develop. 'Amidror further pointed out that now that Israel has decided to negotiate with 'Arafat, it should abstain from taking steps liable to harm or affect his performance. In the current situation, we can have no other partner but 'Arafat. If he collapses, terrible chaos will ensue in the entire region.

Israel: Security Forces Allow Food, Drugs Into Gaza

TA1203155296 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1500 GMT 12 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A short while ago, the security forces permitted several dozen trucks from Egypt to deliver flour and foodstuffs to the Gaza Strip. Our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem reports that Major General Oren Shahor, the coordinator of government activities in the territories, permitted the trucks' entry and also allowed a large shipment of drugs and vaccinations into the Gaza Strip.

Israel: IDF To Reopen Gaza Checkpoint for Food Trucks

TA1203203196 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1900 GMT 12 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Qarni checkpoint in the Gaza Strip will reopen tomorrow morning. Only trucks carrying basic foodstuffs for the residents of the Gaza Strip will be allowed through. The IDF [Israel Defense Forces] Southern Command decided to reopen the checkpoint after security measures agreed upon with the Palestinian Authority were implemented.

Israel: Peres, Turkish President Discuss Terror

TA1203132796 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 12 Mar 96 p 2

[Report by Batsheva Tsur]

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Turkey and Israel are coordinating policy on combating terrorism in advance of the Sharm al-Shaykh conference.

Turkish President Suleyman Demirel, who flew in yesterday for a four-day state visit, conferred with Prime Minister Shim'on Peres for over an hour last night at Jerusalem's King David Hotel, handing him a list of suggestions on the subject of terror.

Peres suggested that the foreign ministers of both countries confer on the points raised when they meet today, a source said.

The discussion also covered a wide range of other issues, including regional water problems and bilateral relations. No specific mention was made of Turkey's fight against the PKK [Workers Party of Kurdistan], the Kurdish terror group, but Israel is not willing to change its traditional position of nonintervention on this point, the source said.

Peres also raised the role of Iran as a threat to regional peace, and Demirel and his advisers were reportedly in agreement on this point.

Peres flatly denied reports of involvement in Turkey's water disputes.

"We have no intention of interfering in the water issue between Turkey and Syria," Peres reportedly told Demirel.

Water should be viewed as an economic resource for Turkey which could supply large areas of the region, Peres said.

Demirel said he hoped that Turkey would be able to provide Israel with 150 million cubic meters of water within two years. As for a pipeline, Peres suggested that the water experts sit down and discuss the feasibility.

Earlier Demirel, who is a hydroengineer by profession, had met with his old friend, former water commissioner Aharon Wiener.

Peres and Demirel both expressed their pleasure at the progress made in bilateral economic, tourism, and academic ties, subjects which will be included in the four agreements to be signed at Bet Hanasi [official presidential residence in Jerusalem] on Thursday [14 March] at the conclusion of the visit. Trade between the two countries doubled in the past year to some $450 million. [passage omitted]

Israel: Turkey's Demirel Visits Knesset, Comments on Terror

TA1203162796 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1500 GMT 12 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Turkish President Suleyman Demirel visited the Knesset today, as part of the first visit by a Turkish president to Israel. Demirel said that Israel and Turkey should stand by each other in the fight against terror. Our correspondent Baraq Ronen reports:

[Begin recording] [Ronen] This was not just another visit by just another president, but the visit of a president who heads a Muslim country of over 60 million citizens. Turkey's leader Demirel stood on the podium in Chagall Hall next to the plenary and most of all spoke about terror. According to him, Muslims and Jews must confront it together with force.

[Demirel, in English] Both our holy books share the following thought: Whoever destroys a single life is as guilty as though he had destroyed humanity.

[Ronen translates the above and continues] Demirel spoke warmly about the ongoing alliance between Israel and Turkey, and heard warm words about the same alliance from his hosts. When Shim'on Peres took the podium, he chose to refer to the good qualities of so many Turks who turned Turkey into a Muslim democracy.

[Peres] Self-assurance and composure, responsibility, and above all, civil courage — these qualities and more, Mr. President, are embodied in your personality. The leadership you have provided to your country during many fruitful years has gained general admiration. You continue to pursue with confidence the enlightened policy of modernism and progress in the Muslim world.

[Ronen] An important visit by an important president in the Knesset today, but it took place in Chagall Hall rather than in the plenary, apparently due to a sparse audience. Knesset members could not attend, since they were too busy with the primaries. [end recording]

Israel: Likud, Gesher, Tzomet Sign Merger Accord at Knesset

TA1203155396 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1500 GMT 12 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The agreement between the Likud, Gesher, and Tzomet Parties was signed at a festive ceremony at the Knesset. Binyamin Netanyahu, David Levi, and Refa'el Eytan, the factions' respective leaders, shook hands and promised to forget their past differences. Netanyahu said that the national camp was now fully unified behind a joint platform for the first time since 1977.

David Levi said that the first important step toward real unity has been taken but noted that potential stumbling blocks still lay ahead and that holes in the agreement still have to be plugged up. There was a rift between us, Levi said, but one must place the country's and people's needs above everything else.

Likud Knesset Member Ari'el Sharon told our correspondent Yo'el Nir that after succeeding in uniting the Likud, Tzomet, and David Levi's movement, he would now seek to forge a religious front. Sharon asserted that such a religious front could help the right wing win the elections.

[Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew at 1500 GMT on 12 March adds: "Reacting to the Likud-Gesher-Tzomet agreement, Labor says that this is a technical union comprising people devoid of a minimal appreciation for each other and creating a list devoid of any program and based solely on a lust for power."]

Israel: Lubrani—Hizballah Leader Confirms Financing by Iran

TA1203125496 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 12 Mar 96 p 1

[Report by David Rudge]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Israel has always known that Hizballah is financed, trained, and armed by Iran, Uri Lubrani, the government's coordinator on Lebanon, told THE JERUSALEM POST yesterday.

"Now along comes (Hizballah leader) Shaykh Hasan Nasrallah and confirms this loud and clear. He goes even further by declaring that Syria is also directly involved, by permitting the logistics of this Iranian effort to pass through its territory," said Lubrani.

"He is admitting that Iran is behind Hizballah and that, in essence, Hizballah is serving as an extension of Iran's efforts to subvert, if not to kill, the peace process. He also admits that Syria is fully in the know and is aiding and abetting these efforts."

Lubrani said he did not know if there was any connection between Nasrallah's disclosures and the international anti-terror summit scheduled to be held in Sharm al-Shaykh tomorrow.

"This is something you should ask Nasrallah himself. In my opinion though, there is an unequivocal indication that Hizballah has made a decision to call a spade a spade. They are now openly confirming this Iranian and Syrian connection, which is behind all terrorist activity directed against Israel from Lebanon."

He reiterated that Hizballah is a terrorist organization and not a Lebanese resistance movement. "We have always said that Hizballah's claim that it is fighting a resistance war is a sham. Nasrallah has now made this clear.

"Hizballah is acting at the behest of the leaders in Tehran, and is fully committed to acting against the peace process. Syria, for its part, has always been playing a double game and this is also made clear now."

Lubrani said Syria's non-participation in the Sharm al-Shaykh conference is in itself a sign that "Syria does not belong to the countries which are against terror."

Nasrallah's disclosures were made in an interview with the London-based weekly AL-WASAT. He was also quoted as saying that Hizballah might take the confrontation with Israel outside the present boundaries.

"There is a clear threat in this, but I'm not impressed. We are not going to refrain from acting in self-defense because of threats," Lubrani said.

Jordan: Prince Hasan, Baraq on Terrorism, Sharm al-Shaykh Summit

JN1203202696 Amman Jordan Television Network in Arabic 1830 GMT 12 Mar 96

[News Conference by Jordan's Crown Prince Hasan, the regent, and Israeli Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq at the Royal Hashemite Court in Amman on 12 March—recorded; in English]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Hasan] Ladies and gentlemen, may I say that in the preparation for the Sharm al-Shaykh summit which we hope will be a summit that facilitates fuller understanding of what is needed to make peace and safeguard peace in this region, that the visit in that context of Foreign Minister Baraq to Jordan is a visit that has given us here the opportunity of once again extending our condolences to the bereaved in Israel as a result of the acts of violence of terrorist organizations during these last grim days. To say clearly, as one Israeli friend put it, that the conference will not bring loved ones back to life but at least it will be a meaningful contribution. We hope to ensure that stability is maintained, that the killing of innocents is prevented by those who believe in life and in the humanity of the peace process without which there can be no peace, psychologically or physically.

I want to say that our contacts, of course, in the last few days have included contacts with many countries, both within the region and beyond the region. In the context of the troika, we are extremely aware of the responsible position taken in the Palermo meeting. We note with interest the visit of the president of Turkey to Israel at this time, and, in terms of the wide regional participation, we are of course in a position of consultation with all countries in the region, and Prime Minister al-Kabariti will be leaving later today to assist in these preparatory consultations in Sharm al-Shaykh.

May I once again welcome Foreign Minister Baraq and in the presence of Prime Minister al-Kabariti welcome your questions.

[Baraq] Your Highness Crown Prince Hasan, Prime Minister al-Kabariti, Ambassador Shamir, I am delighted to be here and to have an opportunity to exchange views with your highness and the prime minister about the situation that led to the Sharm al-Shaykh gathering, and about the actions that we believe should be taken in order to face the challenges of terrorism in a coordinated manner. We do believe that the Sharm al-Shaykh gathering is an important one not only in terms of the political significance and symbolic value but in terms of the concrete results and the mechanism to ensure concrete actions in the future in many areas. We believe that the creation of such a concrete mechanism will ensure future cooperation among wider and wider circles of members of the nations in the Middle East and North Africa, that this objective is achievable and it can cover along the time areas like sharing of intelligence, sharing of technologies, sharing means to control the flow of financial support and financial (shortage) for the terrorist actions and activities and even certain kinds of legislation that might create gradually a situation where the life and activities of terrorists will be more and more limited.

I see a specially positive element in the fact that the leaders of this planet, together with the leaders of the region, the Arab world, provide the world with a signal of their political will to struggle against terrorism. And the gathering of the Europeans in Palermo this weekend that ended with a statement that for the first time identifies those countries that should be visited or addressed in order to reduce the level of terrorism is, in my judgment, a positive development since in order to take a concrete, any kind of concrete action there is a need to identify the appropriate (addresses), and the very fact that the old (positive) forces and players in the region that are gathering in Sharm al-Shaykh are ready to coordinate their future actions is, in my judgment, very important.

We have mutual confidence, mutual respect and a lot of appreciation for what is done by your security services and your other agencies to counter the problem of terror. We have a long tradition working together, and we feel that working together along the lines that had been defined in the appropriate clauses in our agreements provide us with the basis for an effective effort to reduce and suppress terrorism. Thank you very much.

[Correspondent] Your Highness Crown Prince Hasan, we would like to ask you what step did Jordan take against Hamas that's setting here, which is giving logistic support to the military branch that is acting in Gaza Strip, and did you and Foreign Minister Baraq take any specific steps by both countries in the war against Hamas?

[Hasan] I want to take the opportunity to say that in the broader context of the victimization of Muslims in general that it is tragic, that acts of violence are understood in certain quarters as having anything remotely to do with Islam as a value system, with Islam as an ethical and humane system of values, of actions, I think that the very act of suicide, leading to the killing of innocents, is an issue on which Islam is abundantly clear. The very act of jihad without a message is an act effectively which maybe politically expedient to those who wish to use violence, but I want to make it very clear as I have said in the recent response to the challenge laid down by Rabbis (Rekobovits) and Mr. (Sax) in the LONDON TIMES, in correspondence that there are many Muslim voices, moderate, centrist Muslim voices who condemn, as any civilized community would condemn, with great sensitivity and a great sense of injustice, the accusation effectively that there is anything related to Islam in what has happened in those pictures that we have seen of the blood and the carnage in Jerusalem, and Ashqelon, and Tel Aviv. So it is my hope effectively that as we look at terror, whether in Oklahoma, whether in Tokyo, whether in Spain, that it is also recognized that political offices exist in many capitals. You mentioned Hamas, Hamas has offices and activities in many European capitals, including London. You mentioned militancy, and I want to point out effectively that Mr. Farrakhan quite recently visited the region, and I believe travelled to Baghdad and raised a certain question mark in the minds of many, but I want to make it also abundantly clear that the peace treaty with Israel, committed as it is against acts of terror, in detail committed as it is to the maintenance of both current and basic security, that is to say a solemn commitment to the outer parameter security of this peace treaty, which we both strive to protect, should not be seen as license within the rule of law to trammel the individual rights of citizens. I know that you have citizens who are extremely uncomplimentary about Arabs and Muslims, we have citizens who unfortunately are extremely uncomplimentary about the peace treaty and about the inspirers of the peace treaty, including the Jordanian establishment and the Government of Jordan, but so long as they have not crossed the red line, in terms of instigating acts of violence, they are not accountable by law. What is important I think for us to focus today is how we can change the minds of those in the world who believe, and I think Palermo's message was very clear to Tripoli, to Damascus, and to Tehran. There are those in the world who believe effectively that hunting with the hounds and running with the hare, that being the extremist of today and the political figure of tomorrow, is a natural evolution. There is a lot of semantic going on about who is a terrorist and who is a freedom fighter, but I want to make it very clear that for us, the killing of innocent civilians, within the context of a country with whom we have signed an agreement, the resulting measures, including the suffering of many people in the occupied territories and Gaza, as understandable as those measures maybe within the security context, all of these steps are contributing effectively to changing the psychology of peace to a psychology of confrontation. So, rather than questioning each other's credentials, I think that we have to accept that it is a given, that we are committed to basic security, that we are doing everything within our power to deepen the concept of working together as countries of the region. It is not the world that is calling us to order or calling us to develop a new civilized order, it is we, the countries and the peoples of the region who wish to see stability and the rule of law prevail, and we are committed in every possible way to this shared objective.

[Correspondent, in Arabic] Your highness, would you make a statement in Arabic about the essence of your talks?

[Hasan, in Arabic] Today's talks on preparations for the Sharm al-Shaykh summit basically dealt with the ethical Jordanian position, in addition to the Jordanian position within the framework of the Jordanian-Israeli agreement that calls for joint action to combat the causes of tension and instability in the context of circumstantial or basic security conditions.

The talks dealt with the concept of the summit and its results. We spoke about terrorism, not in terms of condemnation as one condemns a sin or aggression. We spoke in detail about the action that should be taken on the regional level and then on the international level to set up a mechanism that will enable this region, like other world regions and areas, to confront criminal activity, whether this is drug trafficking, arms smuggling, or money laundering as I said at an international meeting in Amman two days ago in the presence of representatives of the governments of this part of the world, including the Syrian Arab Republic, the Republic of Lebanon, and the Islamic Republic of Iran. What I would like to say is that there is an obvious issue; namely, the issue of crime, terrorism, and distortion of the Islamic course, which believes that stability substantiates the Koranic verse which condemns suicide, jihad without a cause, and killing innocent civilians. This Islamic course, which used to be called the Islamic awakening, is basically moderate, centrist, and international.

Allowing acts of violence and criminal actions to discredit Islam and Muslims and allowing the persecution of Islam and Muslims due to such acts is unacceptable. I said after an Iftar banquet during the blessed month of Ramadan that the shelling of Sarajevo and the killing of innocent people was something to be condemned. We, Muslims and Jews worked together through the international press to condemn this discrimination. We went together to Mostar and Tuzla, which are cities with Muslim communities, to condemn fighting in Bosnia. We employed the influence of the U.S. Congress, and in particular the influence of the Jewish vote in the U.S. Congress, to intervene in Bosnia and stop fighting there. We believe that the arena of joint action and common ground in condemning terrorism and terrorist organizations is one of the topics to be discussed at this summit, but we believe that action on the regional level as expressed by the visit of the Turkish president to Israel and the participation of a number of leaders — kings and presidents from the Arab and Islamic worlds — in this meeting is a reminder of our basic condemnation of such discredit and such distortion of our reputation.

[Correspondent] Did you envisage the adoption of punitive measures against such countries, and what would you say to Hafiz al-Asad who is not willing to attend this summit?

[Baraq] I think that in a way the very fact that the leadership of the free world, with the leaderships of the Middle East and the North African countries, are coming together—except a few countries—in a way creates the proper differentiation between those who are ready to give a shoulder to the efforts to combat terrorism and those who, at the present, are not ripe for this kind of step.

I believe that if the gathering in Sharm al-Shaykh will yield, will provide us with, a ministerial-level meeting form, or any kind of other form that will carry on the activities and make sure that it will be translated into concrete steps in the areas that I have mentioned earlier, it will ultimately provide this kind of containment effort or suppression effort against terrorism, which is so important to the success of all these efforts.

In my judgment, it is only when a wide international well-coordinated front will be deployed against terrorism the way our forefathers fought against, I will see on the high seas, as you well know once the whole world deployed its effort against the piracy it had been disappeared within half a generation [sentence as heard].

It could be the same, but it's a precondition that worldwide coordinated effort will take place in Sharm al-Shaykh could be a first step on this very important endeavor. Thank you.

[Correspondent] The last question...

[Baraq, interrupting] Please, last question. We should go back to Israel, and his royal highness also... [sentence incomplete as heard]

[Correspondent] His royal highness has spoken of other aspects of terrorism, including for example, organized crime and drugs. Would you like to see these issues be put on the table in the Sharm al-Shaykh summit, in addition to the political aspect? And what could Israel want to do to stop this from turning into an Islamophobia?

[Baraq] I believe that concentration on a relatively new set of objectives would be preferable; namely that this gathering would be concentrated around terrorism, and leave the other effort for another international gathering.

There is certain inter-relationship; sometimes the same money, sometimes the same channels or the same means of communication are used by the drug traffickers and the terrorists who want to move with weapons and explosives over the world.

But in some times the same agencies that are dealing with drug traffic and with terrorism are cooperating within the internal system of any country. But I believe that the objectives of Sharm al-Shaykh should be to concentrate on antiterror activity, mainly in the Middle East and North Africa, but in a way within a wider context of worldwide struggle against terrorism.

I believe that we have heard his royal highness telling us—and I was glad to hear it from such an authoritative source—what I believe that all civilized people know that it is not the spirit of Islam but in a way in contrary to the real spirit of Islam. And I believe that we have no intention, and the world has no intention to make it, or turn it, into Islamophobia. But it's quite important signal to see that leaders of the Arab and Muslim World are coming together and considering how to combat terrorism. There is no need for a better proof that the leaders of the Islamic World, except those three fortresses of terror—Libya, Syria, and Iran—that the majority of leaders of the Arab and Muslim World are against terror as well as all the leaders of the free world. Thank you very much.

[Hasan] Thank you very much.

Jordan: Al-Kabariti on Baraq's Visit, Sharm al-Shaykh Conference

JN1203182396 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1600 GMT 12 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The cabinet met at noon today under Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti. Topics on the agenda were discussed which directly concern the work of ministries and departments and are of interest to the homeland and the citizen.

Following the cabinet session, al-Kabariti spoke to the press on the Sharm al-Shaykh summit and the Israeli foreign minister's talks in Amman. Al-Kabariti said:

[Begin recording] [Al-Kabariti] The talks focused on the need to render peace efforts a success and to continue the negotiations, particularly on the Palestinian track. The progress achieved during the negotiations on this track, not to mention the sensitive stage this track is experiencing with respect to the final status negotiations, is a fact and it is impermissible for us to allow the handful who resort to terrorism to achieve political objectives by blocking the road. We are going to the Sharm al-Shaykh conference to defend the peace process and the peace goals, and to also state that the overwhelming majority supports peace, and that the voice of the majority should be the one to be heard. We will not allow the voice of the minority to prevail and undermine the efforts exerted by the majority.

[Unidentified correspondent] What topics were discussed with the Israeli side?

[Al-Kabariti] It goes without saying that part of the talks focused on bilateral relations. But, the main topic was the need to do more to render the peace efforts a success and the need to pursue work to settle the Palestinian cause, proceed toward the final status negotiations, and activate the other efforts on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks. [end recording]

Jordan: Al-Kabariti—Summit Participation To Defend Peace Process

JN1203155396 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1500 GMT 12 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti said that Jordan's participation in the summit of peacemakers in Sharm al-Shaykh comes in defense of the peace process and the objectives of peace.

He pointed to the need for the voice of the majority to be heard. He said: We should not allow the voice of the minority to prevail or to overpower the majority.

This statement was made to journalists after a cabinet session held today. During the session, topics on the agenda were discussed. They directly concern the work of certain ministries and departments and are of interest to the homeland and citizens.

Jordan: IAF Deputies—Sharm al-Shaykh Summit Protects 'Zionist Terrorism'

JN1203190196 Amman AL-SABIL in Arabic 12-18 Mar 96 pp 1, 15

[Report by Majid al-Khudari]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Islamic Action Front [IAF] deputies criticized Jordan's participation in the international antiterrorism summit, or the so-called Sharm al-Shaykh summit. Heads of more than 30 states are expected to attend this summit.

Among the most prominent leaders who will participate in this summit which will be held in Sharm al-Shaykh on the Egyptian-Palestinian border [as published] tomorrow are His Majesty King Husayn, U.S. President Bill Clinton, Russian President Boris Yeltsin, Italian President Luigi Scalfaro, Egyptian President Husni Mubarak, Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat, Zionist entity Prime Minister Shim'on Peres, British Prime Minister John Major, and representatives of the Arab Gulf and Arab Maghreb states.

The IAF deputies called on the Jordanian Government to boycott the summit because it is aimed at protecting Zionist terrorism, as Shaykh Hamzah Mansur, spokesman for the IAF bloc deputies, put it. This is the least to be done, Dr. Hammam Sa'id said.

The objective of this summit, which takes place following the painful military operations against the Zionist entity in which more than 60 people were killed and 200 others were wounded, is to establish a new regional security system in the Arab region, to establish a regional antiterror center, and to exchange information about terrorists.

The spokesman for the 17 IAF deputies wondered: "Is the occupation of Palestine and the expulsion of its people not an act of terrorism? Is the continued occupation of Jerusalem and the insistence that it is Israel's eternal capital not an act of terrorism? Is the land and sea blockade not an act of terrorism? Is the arrest of citizens, men, women, and the elderly, not an act of terrorism? Is the continued imprisonment of paralyzed Shaykh Ahmad Yasin not an act of terrorism? Is the arrest of Dr. Musa Abu-Marzuq not an act of terrorism? Is the expulsion of citizens not an act of terrorism? Is the harassment of strugglers and liquidating them inside and outside their homeland not an act of terrorism? Is the continued occupation of southern Lebanon not an act of terrorism? Is the continuous aggression against the Lebanese people not an act of terrorism?"

His colleague deputy Hammam Sa'id called on the Jordanian Government not to be blindly subservient to the Americans, and to stop its condemnations and denunciations. In a statement addressed to the Jordanian Government, he said: "The Jordanian people have suffered the most as the result of the Palestine question. The Palestinians are either refugees, displaced, or wounded as a result of the Zionist occupation. The Jordanian people are Muslim people who are affiliated with Palestine, especially since it is the land where prophet Muhammad made his midnight journey to the seven heavens. Palestine is a public endowment which can neither be sold nor given as a gift." He added: "Palestine was occupied by murderers who shed the blood of our people, and who have always been and are still the masters of terrorism. We are astonished at this international plotting, led by the United States. What we see is a new alliance against the mujahidin, the martyrs, and the defenders of the homeland and honor."

Dr. Hammam Sa'id said: "The only crime of these mujahidin is that they have defended their homeland and sanctities. These mujahidin are not mercenaries or strangers to Palestine, but they are the sons of the camps, refugees, the displaced, the oppressed, the martyrs, and the bereaved ones."

Concluding his statement, Dr. Hammam Sa'id said: "I wonder about this Jordanian stand which shares with the Jews their denunciation and condemnation. The government's stand has almost exceeded the Jewish stand as if the Jews had returned rights and disavowed the occupation of homelands and the holy places."

Acting Prime Minister 'Abdallah al-Nusur answered the questions posed by Shaykh Hamzah Mansur and Dr. Hammam Sa'id by saying: "Colleague Hamzah Mansur is fully aware of the answers to his rhetorical questions. I would like to ask the colleague: Has Jordan ever recognized Israel's sovereignty over Jerusalem? Let us not raise this issue because it is a national issue over which we do not disagree." He also replied to Dr. Hammam Sa'id by saying: "The sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people is the PLO, and not any opposition side. The final say is for the Palestinian National Authority which is recognized by the world and the Arab states. Any other opinion is personal."

Al-Nusur did not touch on the issue of the Sharm al-Shaykh summit or Zionist terrorism. He only reiterated the Arab and Jordanian constants in this regard.

Jordan: Muslim Brotherhood Defends Hamas Attacks

JN1203190396 Amman AL-SABIL in Arabic 12-18 Mar 96 p 2

["Text" of statement issued by the Muslim Brotherhood Media Bureau in Amman; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] Since the recent martyrdom-seeking and jihad operations, world and domestic news media have been carrying condemnations of and threats to the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, and its supporters, oblivious of the continued Zionist occupation of our land and holy places. They have ignored the fact that what is called peace and peace agreements took place under balances of power that drastically tip in favor of the enemy. Therefore, those agreements meet the enemy's interests, achieve its ambitions, and ignore our people's rights to their homeland, holy places, and decent life. Thousands of detainees are still unjustly in jail, while tens of thousands of disabled, orphans, and widows, whose numbers are increasing daily, are living in deprivation, poverty, agony, and injustice.

The Muslim Brotherhood considers what Hamas and the militant factions are doing on the soil of Palestine an act resistance approved by all divine laws, international norms, and human rights, for the aggression is still continuing and the occupation is a reality. Killings, imprisonments, torture, and displacements are a daily fact suffered by the Palestinian people.

Hamas expresses the conscience and spirit of the nation. Therefore, all the effective forces of the nation support it. The enemy's rejection of the truce proposals and suspension of operations against civilians confirms the hostile, vindictive nature of this enemy and its insistence on its arrogant stands, sanguinary mentality, tyranny, and disdain for others. This rejection will make civilians suffer more of the bloodbaths that the enemy started in Dayr Yasin, al-Sammu', and Qibyah, and continued in al-Aqsa and al-Ibrahimi Mosques, the camps in southern Lebanon, and elsewhere.

The Muslim Brotherhood believe that the enemy threats to the mujahid movements in Palestine and their supporters in the world prove the enemy's role in leading the war against Islam and the Islamic nation under wicked, propagandistic slogans. These threats should incite all honorable ones to cooperate and collectively join the nation's front of defending the faith, rights, interests, and holy places against this Zionist-world aggression.

In this ideological, cultural conflict, participants and motives have become distinctly clear. This and other conflicts prove the nation's vitality and unlimited potential. It is a conflict that heralds a new era of emancipation, progress, and dignity.

Lebanon: Al-Hariri—Syrians Not Worried About Sharm al-Shaykh Summit

NC1203152996 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1400 GMT 12 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri has expressed satisfaction with the outcome of his visit to Damascus yesterday and his talks with Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad and senior Syrian officials. He said he sensed full support for all the government's measures at both the local and international levels.

Dismissing any fears on the assembly of the Sharm al-Shaykh summit, al-Hariri said: We are committed to the peace process and are ready to attend any conference held to support this process.

He noted that Syrian officials are not worried about the Sharm al-Shaykh summit, that they have always articulated their commitment to the region's peace process, and that they believe that negotiations with the Israelis will be resumed in future.

Al-Hariri visited President Ilyas al-Hirawi and briefed him on the outcome of his talks with President al-Asad and developments of the Sharm al-Shaykh summit.

Lebanon: Al-Murr Discusses Post-Summit Security Steps, U.S. Reports

NC1203131396 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1215 GMT 12 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Engineer Michel al-Murr, deputy prime minister and interior minister, has stated that the Central Security Council, during its meeting today, studied the issue of security precautions after the Sharm al-Shaykh summit. He said: We are not worried but the security bodies are expected to take security precautions, particularly after warnings being broadcast by the radios. He was referring to Israeli radio, which spoke about a war on Hizballah.

Minister al-Murr chaired a meeting of the Central Security Council at the Interior Ministry at 1100 this morning. [passage omitted]

Discussions during the meeting focused on two reports released by the U.S. State Department—on human rights in Lebanon and on drugs. Al-Murr said most of the points in the reports are wrong and based on information passed on to the U.S. Administration from local sources that want to distort the work of the Lebanese Government. He said Lebanon no longer cultivates drugs following the concerted efforts of the security forces with the help of the Syrian forces. He denied that there are drugs factories in Lebanon. [passage omitted]

Lebanon: Hizballah, Other Shiite Leaders Condemn Summit on Terrorism

NC1203181196 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1715 GMT 12 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In Beirut, Hizballah has asserted that it is ready to help all those who resist Israel, referring to Palestinian Islamists who carry out suicide operations in Israel.

In an interview with the L'ORIENT LE JOUR newspaper, Shaykh Na'im Qasim, Hizballah's number two man, announced that the party is willing to extend all necessary facilities to the strugglers against Israel. He emphasized the principle of cooperation between Hizballah and the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas.

Yesterday, Hizballah Secretary General Hasan Nasrallah stressed that his party may be forced in the future to expand the scope of its operations against Israel to cover the entire world.

Husayn al-Musawi, leader of the Islamic Amal Movement, saluted the mujahidin and defenders of their rights and land in Lebanon and Palestine. In his Koranic seminar, he said: We curse and condemn the summit for supporting international terrorism and combating Islam. It is a summit that was ordered by the creators of terrorism, the killers of prophets, and the heroes of Hiroshima, Dayr Yasin, Sabra, Shatila, Bi'r al-'Abd, and the al-Ibrahimi Mosque, in the words of al-Musawi.

Lebanon: Christian Oppositionist Criticizes Refusal To Attend Peacemakers Summit

NC1203174496 Cairo MENA in English 1649 GMT 12 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Beirut, 12 Mar (MENA)—A prominent Lebanese opposition figure today criticized Lebanon's rejection to attend the peacemakers summit.

Lebanon's rejection of the invitation of U.S. President Bill Clinton to attend Sharm al-Shaykh summit asserts that the ruling regime in Lebanon is not at the level of the responsibility of statesmen, Albert Mukhaybir, head of the Gathering (Tajammu') Party for the Sake of the Republic, said.

Mukhaybir, a former member of the Chamber of Deputies and a prominent Christian opposition figure, said the regime in Lebanon once again missed adequate circumstances for the liberation of the south and the Western al-Biqa'.

Lebanon: Buwayz on Economic Situation, Latest Violence

MM1203123496 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 9 Mar 96 p 5

[Interview with Lebanese Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz by Ibrahim 'Awad in Beirut; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] ['Awad] In the light of the recent blasts in Israel and its leaders' threats to punish Lebanon and other states, and because of the recent disagreements on many issues, the Lebanese arena seems to be in a state of confusion. How will the government face this situation?

[Buwayz] It is normal for any country recovering from war to have unresolved social, security, and political issues. I believe that what has been achieved is not insignificant, even though we have to admit that there are some issues on which the Lebanese people do not agree. Hence, we should not dramatize what is happening in the Lebanese arena. This situation should not prevent us from creating a protective shield against the region's variables and the current storms. Lebanon's strength resides in the unity of its ranks and the Lebanese people agreeing on their basic regional and international options. I believe that the recent developments in Israel and in some Arab states call for tightening the ranks and tackling the challenges in a rational way.

['Awad] Has the government performed its task in this context, especially with regard to providing solutions for the labor demands which have recently caused the disagreement to escalate?

[Buwayz] The government should meet the needs of Lebanese economic sectors and their demands. However, we believe that the government draws its economic strength from the people and that to favor one group at the expense of another would be to victimize it. The government's role is to provide a scientific, measured, and economic approach guaranteeing the rights of the workers, the working classes, and the investors, without whom there would be no drive or impetus in the economy.

The government has two options: The first is to try and encourage investments by making Lebanon a country of free investment, guaranteeing the safety of investments and offering wide economic potential. The second is to take into consideration the conditions of the workers and the working classes and their rights. The middle course between these two options is to formulate a serious economic policy. To yield to certain psychological, political, or human pressures to the detriment of economic logic would satisfy some and anger others, and would take us back to square one. To give people in the public sector more than what is affordable would be deceptive and would undermine the Lebanese pound and the economy's credibility. It would be like someone issuing a check without sufficient funds.

['Awad] You talked about encouraging investment, yet the situation has worsened and a curfew has been imposed.

[Buwayz] I will not deny that I sympathize with some of the workers' demands. However, I do not believe that the measures taken are different from measures in any other country. True, there is labor bitterness in Lebanon. However, we have for some time seen such bitterness in France and other countries of the world. I do not believe that inflating the issues serves the Lebanese people's interests. There is a world recession and a freeze in the employment situation. The situation in Lebanon is no worse than in most of the world's states, and, as we are recovering from war, we cannot ignore the fact that our situation needs solutions.

['Awad] It has been said that your condemnation of "violence" following the recent blasts in Israel was prompted by the U.S. Administration's request.

[Buwayz] We do not base our position on any quarters' requests, and no one has asked us, despite the speculation and analysis which we read in some newspapers. We have witnessed a new situation in the region and have adopted a position which we think is rational and logical.

['Awad] Do you fear an extensive Israeli military operation, and what precautions has Lebanon taken to face such a possibility?

[Buwayz] From observing the situation inside Israel, it seems that there are proposals to carry out retaliatory operations. However, we can neither preempt events, nor analyze and speculate. We believe, however, that retaliation would not achieve results. The solution would be to provide real momentum for the peace process, speed it up, and put an end to the delays and evasiveness that it is witnessing. Only a just and comprehensive peace can put an end to violence in the region.

['Awad] What is the latest news on the Lebanese-Israeli track?

[Buwayz] I believe that all tracks were frozen following Israel's decision to hold early elections and the developments in Israel. There is no doubt that there is a noticeable paralysis. We are waiting for a solution to the fact that Israel withdrew its negotiating team from Maryland.

['Awad] How would you describe the current phase?

[Buwayz] ...Very critical.

Syria: Al-Shar' Defines Stand on Sharm al-Shaykh Summit

JN1203215096 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 2120 GMT 12 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' received U.S. Ambassador in Damascus Christopher Ross this evening, and informed him that Syria does not agree to attend the Sharm al-Shaykh summit.

Explaining Syria's stand to the U.S. ambassador, the foreign minister said: A summit of such importance should have been preceded by a preparatory meeting, an agreement on the agenda, and allocating the necessary time to enable the participants to hold objective discussions in accordance with the known rules on holding conferences.

It is regrettable that all these elements were not made available for this meeting, which was given a few hours only. This confirms that convening it in such a manner and under the emotional atmosphere with which it has been engulfed will serve the stands and interests of Israel at the expense of the Arabs interests and rights.

Al-Shar' added: Syria has been the first to call more than 10 years ago for an international conference that would define terrorism in accordance with principles of international law and the provisions of the UN Charter.

The foreign minister stressed that Syria has frequently denounced terrorism and the killing of innocent people out of its principled and humanitarian convictions, especially since it, before others, has suffered from terrorism.

Al-Shar' emphasized that Syria has made and is making great sacrifices as a result of Israel's continued occupation of the Golan and the other Arab territories, and its expulsion of hundreds of thousands of the displaced.

The foreign minister stressed Syria's continued commitment to working for a just and comprehensive peace which was embodied by its stands during the peace talks which began at the Madrid conference. He added: Based on this, Syria asked the peace cosponsors to make the necessary contacts to resume the Madrid conference out of its belief that the Madrid mechanism includes the agreed upon framework and bases to help achieve peace which is aspired by the region's peoples.

Syria: Egypt Reportedly 'Respects' Damascus Stand on Summit

JN1303065496 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0515 GMT 13 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo—Egyptian Information Minister Safwat al-Sharif said Syria and Lebanon support the Middle East peace process, but they have their own viewpoint on the Sharm al-Shaykh conference.

Al-Sharif said his country respects the viewpoints of Syria and Lebanon.

Syria: Damascus Radio Cites Clinton's Remarks on al-Asad Position

JN1303070496 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0515 GMT 13 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Washington—U.S. President Bill Clinton said he believes President Hafiz al-Asad will continue the peace process and this is something very important.

In a statement last night aboard the plane that will take him from Washington to Sharm al-Shaykh, Clinton said: I am confident that Syria will adhere to its commitment toward the peace process despite its absence from the Sharm al-Shaykh conference.

Syria: Damascus Radio Reports Differences Over Sharm al-Shaykh Summit

JN1303073496 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0515 GMT 13 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Sharm al-Shaykh—The Sharm al-Shaykh conference will start today, Wednesday, amid unprecedented tight security measures, which Egypt employed in cooperation with Israel, the United States, and a number of countries participating in the conference.

Egyptian security forces, helped by international security agencies, are combing the Sharm al-Shaykh area. Egyptian security units are also patrolling the streets of the area and the coastline to provide security to the participating delegations.

AFP reports that Egyptian gunboats are patrolling the coast. It adds that U.S., French, Israeli, and Italian security teams arrived in Sharm al-Shaykh and are coordinating with the Egyptian security officials on security measures.

Informed sources say that no specific agenda has been set yet for the conference, which is scheduled to open at 1100 today, Wednesday. More than nine world leaders are expected to address the opening session, headed by U.S. President Bill Clinton and Egyptian President Husni Mubarak since they extended the invitations to this conference.

Meanwhile, European diplomatic sources confirmed that there are major differences between the EU and the United States over the final statement of the Sharm al-Shaykh conference, which is expected to open today, Wednesday. These sources told Radio Orient yesterday that the Europeans insist on rejecting the text of the statement prepared by senior U.S. officials.

THE WASHINGTON TIMES said division emerged in the Sharm al-Shaykh conference even before it started. Experts wonder what this conference can achieve under this division. Experts confirm that with the absence of the basic parties, this conference will turn into a forum for differences. The paper adds that the real problem facing the participants in the conference lies in the contradictory moral view they have of the so-called terrorism, which means there are gaps in everybody's views on the meaning of terrorism.

THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR says the Sharm al-Shaykh conference, the preparations for which were made very hastily, lacks any substance despite the fact that it contains many political symbols of peace. The paper says: The conference will strengthen confidence in Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres' government in a crucial election phase. The paper notes that U.S. officials hope that this conference will strengthen Peres' popularity among the Israeli public opinion.

Syria: Commentary Questions 'Motives' of Sharm al-Shaykh Summit

JN1303114896 Damascus Syrian Arab Television Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 12 Mar 96

["Behind the News" commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Gentlemen: Only a few days separate the call to hold the summit in Sharm a-Shaykh and its convocation tomorrow. What draws attention are the additions that have been made to the title of this summit. First it was said the summit was aimed at combating terrorism. Then it was said the summit was aimed to rescue the peace process. Later, it was called the Peacemakers Summit. We do not know if more terms will be added to make the summit more attractive and exciting, especially in view of the attempt to give it an international cover. This international cover aims at giving the summit a legitimacy that can serve as a term of reference for its conferees when they adopt prewritten resolutions — resolutions that will not convince anyone that they are the result of the summit's few hours of deliberation.

We will not prejudge the summit and the resolutions and measures it will yield. However, what is of concern to us and to everyone who is following events in the region and the world are those selective motives which prompted the expeditious convening of the summit and the acquittal of those responsible for practicing violence and terrorism. The Middle East has witnessed and continues to witness violence and terrorism since the start of the Zionist project in Palestine and the accompanying aggressive wars, tensions, and acts of organized terrorism, which, after 1967, surpassed the Dayr Yasin massacres in terms of ugliness and size.

The logical question is: Why was the Ibrahimi Mosque massacre dropped from the selectivity list of the organizers of the Sharm al-Shaykh summit? Why were attacks on civilian aircraft, encroachment on the sovereignty of independent countries, and the kidnapping of some of their citizens dropped from this selectivity list? Furthermore, why were the daily operations aimed at killing the Palestinian intifadah and breaking the bones of its children dropped from this list? Why are acts of killing and collective punishment in southern Lebanon being blacked out?

We will not go further to ask, for example: Why was there not a call for an antiterrorism summit after a bombing incident in Oklahoma City, London, Paris, Islamabad, Algiers, Egypt and other places? There is a long list of questions. The record of Israeli terrorism is full of black pages. The world has not yet forgotten the killing of international mediator Bernadotte, the burning of al-Aqsa Mosque, and demolition of houses of Arab citizens, and the liquidation inside and outside the occupied territories of everyone struggling to liberate his land from Israeli occupation.

Gentlemen: In statements to the BBC on 2 October 1993, President Hafiz al-Asad said: We proposed the issue of terrorism for discussion since 1985. We said that we should publicly agree on the meaning of terrorism because many people confuse terrorism with the legitimate struggle practiced by human beings since the beginning of time. The president said: The terrorist is a criminal who kills for the sake of stealing, plundering, and blackmail and, in general, to satisfy personal evil tendencies.

However, we are concerned about struggle against the occupiers. If the term "terrorism" is applied to us for these reasons, then almost all people are terrorists. Throughout history, people were colonized and those who were colonized have struggled using various methods to oust colonization and liberate their territories. The United States also practiced such struggle.

Gentlemen: Syria condemns terrorism, meaning crime. Syria distinguishes between this kind of terrorism and the legitimate struggle toward ending occupation. For years, Syria has called for an international conference on this issue. It stressed this stand in its political work and dealing with the United Nations, other international organizations, and countries of the world.

The Madrid conference was founded on a U.S. initiative that considered the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 242 and 338 the basis for achieving a just and lasting peace in the region. Since that conference, Syria asserted that peace is its strategic choice and that the realization of peace will achieve security and stability for all countries of the region.

However, what has been achieved during the past four years or so? Did Israel give up all the occupied Arab territories? Did it accept the land-for-peace principle and withdrawal to the 4 June 1967 borders? None of this has taken place. Not a single Israeli official has once announced that Israel will withdraw to the 4 June 1967 borders.

Even the Oslo agreement was reached away from the Madrid terms of reference and inside dark corridors. The Oslo agreement not only neglected resolutions of international legitimacy, it also emerged as a deformed baby incapable of survival — something which added to this baby's hardships and exacerbation of its situation as well as the failure to achieve the security Israel wants.

Hence, how can Israel be acquitted of obstructing peace and how can such an accusation be leveled against those who are struggling for the right to self-determination and for the liberation of their homeland from occupation? Moreover, how can the victim replace the aggressor after neglecting the facts of the conflict.

The continuation of the occupation is responsible for violence and counter-violence. The occupation cannot cancel the right of people to liberate their land. Moreover, peace cannot be achieved with the continuation of any form of occupation and hegemony.

If there is real commitment to the peace process and to rescuing it, then we must define who is really responsible for planting obstacles on the road to peace. Holding another Madrid conference with the participation of all its parties means a return to the principles according to which this conference was held. This conference cannot be erased with the passage of time to justify the occupation and to punish everyone who adheres to his right to his homeland and to liberating his land.

Syria: Radio Says Sharm al-Shaykh Summit Held To 'Rescue' Israel

JN1203172796 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1240 GMT 12 Mar 96

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Any objective observer of Middle East developments will definitely acknowledge that Arabs in general, and Syria in particular, have been calling on Israel over the past four and a half years to realize just and comprehensive peace that will restore their occupied lands and bring about real stability in the region. However, this has been to no avail.

In spite of Syria's efforts and numerous initiatives to render the peace process a success, Israel did not take a single measure to help achieve the aspired progress. Israeli occupation is still squatting in the Golan, in southern Lebanon, and in the other occupied Arab lands.

Every time there are signs of possible relative breakthrough in the negotiations, Israel intentionally places new obstacles and comes up with new conditions or exploits any unexpected incident as a pretext to pull out from the talks. An example of this is what happened following the recent explosions in Jerusalem, Ashqelon, and Tel Aviv when Israel blamed Arabs in general, including Syria, as if the aim of the talks is not to achieve peace and restore occupied Arab lands, but to protect Israel and its occupation.

Amid the clamor Israel intentionally creates, using the forces that support it, the real objective of the Madrid conference gets lost, and priorities are turned upside down and curtailed by political selectivity through an international propaganda demonstration, or through what is being prepared for in Sharm al-Shaykh, to rescue those who are the real cause of impeding peace and keeping the region in a state of conflict and turmoil.

Instead of admitting the fact that occupation is the real cause of all the serious incidents that take place in the region, and that the termination of occupation within the framework of a just peace is the right approach to security and stability, Israel holds the resistance responsible, and demands that it be uprooted and that Arabs prove their good conduct by relinquishing their rightful demands and striking at any resistance of occupation. This simply means that Israel absolutely does not intend to withdraw and uses occupation and what it entails in terms of suppression, displacement, and demolition of houses to implement its schemes of expansion.

It is obvious to all those concerned with peace that the region now is as far removed from peace as can be, despite all the arduous negotiations and international efforts exerted over more than four years. The reason for this is simple; namely, that the peace process is in one world, while its terms of reference are in a different world altogether. Israel did not abide by any of the Madrid conference principles or Security Council resolutions that regulate the peace process. It interprets peace according to its whims and schemes and sets one condition after the other, thus stripping the peace process of all its terms of reference.

The essence of the peace process is the exchange of land for peace. However, Israel did not restore anybody's land and has violated the Oslo agreement—despite its vulnerability and weakness and the fact that it overlooks the Palestinian peoples' rights—on several occasions. Hence, comes Syria's call for resuming the Madrid conference and for reasserting the bases and terms of reference of the peace process, particularly as the conference continues to be in session until the peace process is concluded.

The two sponsors of the peace process committed themselves to achieving just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East. Where is this peace? Has Israel withdrawn from one single occupied Arab land? Does the international community accept to have Israel mix up the cards in this manner and tamper with the bases of the peace process and Security Council resolutions, thus turning occupation into a right for Israel, while resisting occupation turns into terrorism? If what Israel promotes is true, the Nazi aggression against Europe, Russia, and other states would be legitimate, and resisting the Nazi aggression would be called terrorism.

Mixing the papers in such a manner and falsifying facts does not serve the peace process at all. The Israeli occupation, Israel's expansionist ambitions and settlement schemes, and the obstacles Israel places in the face of rendering the peace talks a success are the source of the bloody incidents and the escalation of tension. Stability in the region can materialize only with the elimination of occupation and the restoration of Arabs' rights and lands. Throughout history, barbaric repression never achieved peace. Peace was achieved when people's rights were restored.

Syria supports peace. The entire world has recognized its sincere efforts in seeking peace. However, Syria does not relinquish its land, does not go back on its principles, and distinguishes between terrorism and resistance. Resistance is legitimate while terrorism is condemned, and topping the list of this terrorism is the ongoing Israeli occupation of the Golan since 1967.

Syria: Madrid Conference Called 'Real Rescue' for Peace Process.

JN1003145696 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1237 GMT 10 Mar 96

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Gentlemen: Undoubtedly, all sides can tell that the peace process is currently facing a serious impasse, and is facing shocks and obstacles which would eventually take it to a dead end. Without discussing details and reasons, the serious crisis in this process must be dealt with. The peace process also must be put on the right course. Here, we ask: How can this be achieved? How can the peace process be saved from what it is facing? To further clarify the issue, what is the best and exemplary formula to tackle the peace process and save it from its impasse? Before responding to questions about rescuing the peace process, it must be noted that, during the Madrid conference in late 1991, the parties concerned agreed — through the mediation of the cosponsors of the peace process, the United States and the Russian Federation — on the possibility of reconvening the conference if the results of the talks had not arrived at the aspired aim of a just, comprehensive peace. Besides, the conference did not conclude its work; its sessions were suspended. Afterward, bilateral talks on all tracks commenced in Washington. Since the Madrid conference is the term of reference of the peace process, then it is natural when abstruse obstacles emerge that the concerned parties refer to the set term of reference, especially since it is the only appropriate framework on which all the parties concerned agreed.

Based on this, Syria's call for reconvening the Madrid conference seems appropriate, objective, and sincere. It reflects faithfulness and commitment to the Madrid formula and the foundations on which the conference was convened. The call also clearly shows Syria's sincere eagerness to advance the peace process and tackle the difficulties it faces. It also shows Damascus' faith in the peace option based on the implementation of the UN resolutions on whose basis the Madrid conference was held. These are Resolutions 242, 338, and 425, and the land-for-peace formula, as stipulated by the U.S. initiative. The accumulation of obstacles to the peace process has exposed it to serious setbacks and turbulence. We must not forget that if this accumulation continues as it is, the peace process will be in danger of collapse. Thus, all efforts previously exerted would be to no avail.

In light of this, reconvening the Madrid conference will undoubtedly be a real rescue for the peace process. It will immediately give the peace process the momentum it needs at this stage and revive hopes for establishing a just, comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

Syria: Radio Justifies Call To Return to Madrid Peace Conference

JN1103163496 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1242 GMT 11 Mar 96

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Gentlemen: Since the dawn of the Corrective Movement led by President Hafiz al-Asad, Syria has been saying that it looks forward to peace and that it believes in peace as a great and noble human value.

Syria only accepted the invitation to the Madrid conference and agreed to hold direct negotiations with Israel stemming from this belief in peace and from its deep awareness of the role of peace in promoting development and progress, employing capabilities and energies in construction, investing resources in the field of development, and replacing the war machine and equipment with the machines and tools of production.

For four years and more than four months after the Madrid conference convened—during which rounds of Syrian-Israeli talks were held and tours of mediators were made to push the peace process toward the objective of this conference—the peace process has not progressed toward the sought objective.

Instead, the peace process has faced Israeli obstacles and attempts to deviate this process from its track toward twisted roads and branching alleys. This was a very important factor in making the peace process stumble, stop, and face a stalemate many times, in addition to the closed doors.

Meanwhile, the Syrian position, whether in the rounds of bilateral negotiations or in the meetings with U.S. and other officials, absolutely avoided methods of maneuvering and deception. The Syrian position was also extremely clear and eager to entrench the bases of a real and durable peace based on justice.

No doubt, all those concerned with peace in the region—who contributed to activating the peace process since the Madrid conference—have been convinced of Syria's credibility, and they have lauded its good intentions and its honest inclination toward peace in accordance with the pillars stipulated in Security Council Resolutions 242, 338, and 425 as well as the formula proposed in the U.S. initiative which calls for exchanging land for peace.

These international pillars and this U.S. formula were the basis for the Madrid conference. They were also the slogan of this conference which was an impetus and a justification for its convocation.

Now that more than four years have passed, it is indeed regrettable that the peace process should end up on a road almost entirely blocked by Israel's intransigence and insistence on reaping the fruit of its aggression in the form of gains at the expense of Arab land, rights, and dignity.

Therefore, it was necessary to return to the Madrid conference in the hope that the two cosponsors of the peace process, in cooperation with all the international forces who participated in this conference, will agree on a way to save the peace process from collapse and save the region from the threats posed to it, to world peace and security, and to the interests of peoples.

Perhaps, it is useless to exert efforts and waste time in addressing the repercussions of an absent peace as well as the resulting violence and disturbances instead of working to entrench the bases of peace. Only peace is the great guarantee for security, safety, and stability for all parties.

Afghanistan

Afghanistan: Taleban Fears 'Joint' Government Attacks

LD1303064496 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto 0730 GMT 12 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A reliable source has told a 'SHAHADAT' newspaper correspondent that Taleban's high council is concerned about a large joint offensive against their positions in Kabul and Herat in the coming few days. This is being discussed at the current Taleban meeting. They are discussing how to handle the new situation. The source said: During the meeting, the remarks of Taleban leader, Ehsanollah Ehsan, which he made during public meetings in Peshawar, were also strongly criticized. He had condemned some opponents of the Kabul Administration in very harsh terms. The report says: The meeting criticized Ehsanollah Ehsan because they believe different fronts were created against the Taleban after his remarks.

While the Taleban fear a joint attack by the state and some other forces on their positions, Hezb-e Eslami firmly denies any agreement and [break in reception] with Kabul Administration and insists that all opponents of the Kabul Administration join forces.

Afghanistan: Kabul Government Launches Massive Shell Attack on Taleban

BK1203154496 Hong Kong AFP in English 1519 GMT 12 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kabul, March 12 (AFP) — The Afghan Government has launched a major artillery, rocket and bomb attack on the Taleban militia besieging Kabul, a Defence Ministry official said Tuesday.

The assault on the Taleban lines south of Kabul came after two days of attacks on government frontline positions by the militia, the spokesman said.

"The Taleban for the past two days have targeted government positions and government troops therefore had to respond ..." he said.

Afghan air force jets bombed the key Taleban base at Chahar Asiab, 25 kilometers (16 miles) south of the capital, five times Tuesday, killing 16 fighters and destroying two vehicles, defence sources and soldiers in the area said.

"Their heavy weapons sites and military barracks were mainly targeted," the defence spokesman said, adding the Islamic warriors had reinforced their frontlines near Chahar Asiab prior to the assault.

The attack, which began late Monday and lasted through the night, came just a day ahead of the planned visit of UN peace envoy to Afghanistan Mahmoud Mestiri.

Mestiri's two-year-old peace and shuttle diplomacy drive has brought little change to the geo-political map in Afghanistan, bled by a civil war for the past four years, observers here said.

Earlier Tuesday, the Afghan Government denied it was preparing a massive three-pronged assault on the key western city of Herat which it lost to the Taleban six months ago.

"We have proposed peace talks to all the opposition groups in Afghanistan and will not take any such military action unless there is no option left open to us," the Defence Ministry spokesman said.

"We certainly do not confirm reports that we are planning an offensive in the southwest of the country," he added.

News reports in neighbouring Pakistan, which Kabul accuses of backing the Taleban militia encircling Kabul, said Monday the government would launch a major attack on Herat from three directions, including from inside nearby Iran.

The report, quoting "informed sources", said the offensive from Iran would be led by former Herat Governor Ismael Khan, once one of the top commanders of Kabul's military strongman, Ahmad Shah Mas'ud.

"We, unlike the Taleban, would never attack any group inside Afghanistan from outside the country," the defence spokesman said in a reference to allegations that the militiamen have staged assaults from Pakistan.

Pakistan has denied it backs the Taleban militarily or financially or that it has allowed its fighters to use Pakistan for military purposes.

The Taleban have vowed to topple the government and install Islamic law.

Afghanistan: IRNA Reports on Fighting Between Government, Taleban

LD1203191896 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1747 GMT 12 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 12, IRNA - A severe armed conflict between the Afghan Government troops and the opposition Taleban militia, which broke out some four days ago around Kabul after a 10-day lull, still rages mainly in the south and southwest of Kabul.

According to an Afghan Defense Ministry spokesman, since last night, fierce battles has been on in the regions of Chahar Asiab, Rish Khvor, Kheyrabad, and also in Kowt-e 'Ashrow situated in Lowgar province between the two sides.

Meanwhile, the military aircraft have been performing sorties to pound the Taleban positions in the south of Kabul till Tuesday noon. however there is no report on the casualties and damage inflicted.

An anonymous source stated that Taleban's absence of air power has rendered it impotent and as a consequence of such circumstances it has suffered severe casualties and damage during the past three days.

The source went on to say that despite three days of serious encounters between the government forces and Taleban militia, there has been no perceivable changes in the fighting position.

In the meantime, the official sources have announced recently that vast military operations are expected to be made against the Taleban in the near future in a bid to make the opposition retreat from the Kabul region.

Afghanistan: Government Forces Bomb Taleban Positions

LD1303095196 Tehran IRNA in English 0822 GMT 13 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kabul, March 13, IRNA — Some 16 Taleban militiamen were killed and several others injured in air raids carried out by the Afghan Government jet fighters on Tuesday [12 Mar], said the Afghan Defence Ministry in a statement on Tuesday.

In response to the latest Taleban shelling of Kabul, the government war planes repeatedly bombarded the group's positions at Chahar Asiab, Rish Khor and Kheyrabad regions, as a result of which a large number of Taleban forces were killed or wounded and part of its military machinery was destroyed, added the statement.

According to the source, heavy exchange of artillery fire between the two warring sides around the besieged capital is going on.

Accusing the Taleban militiamen of renewing the attacks, the statement said that during the past 20 days tens of innocent and defenceless residents of Kabul have been killed in the shellings.

Afghanistan: Kabul Envoy Comments on Current Issues

LD1203221796 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0730 GMT 12 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In a recent telephone interview with the SHAHADAT newspaper, Solayman Shah, consul general of the Kabul administration in Peshawar, made the following remarks on Kabul-Islamabad relations:

Afghanistan needs to have good relations with all its neighbors, especially Iran and Pakistan, which extensively helped our refugees during the jihad, in order to safeguard Afghanistan's political independence, geographical boundaries, and economic interests. Solayman Shah added: These relations should be based on bilateral and mutual respect, and the legitimate and national interests of each must be respected. He said: Although Afghans differ on many issues, in matters of national interest they accept that such issues [as heard] should be tackled through a central government.

Answering a question on talks with the Taleban, the Kabul administration's consul general said: I have no new information in this respect nor do I want to comment on this. Answering another question he remarked: If jihadi leaders give priority to national interests and the tranquillity of all compatriots, it is possible for our problems to be resolved through talks. There are some fundamental issues the settlement of which is the joint responsibility of all parties.

He added: Talks between Hezb-e Eslami and the state, and Rabbani's suggestion that he is ready to go to opposing groups bases for talks, are in my opinion good measures. If all parties genuinely make sacrifices and jointly embark on resolving problems through talks, the possibility of resolving the problems will increase. Fighting is making us a laughing stock in the eye of friends and foes and wrecking our dignity and honor. I repeat, if all sides unite on fundamental issues including security in the country, several of our problems can be resolved.

India

India: Commentary on U.S., Pakistan Role at Peacemakers Summit

BK1303113496 Delhi All India Radio General Overseas Service in English 1010 GMT 13 Mar 96

[Commentary by Rai Singh]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The 30-plus nation peacemakers summit starting at the Egyptian resort town of Sharm al-Shaykh on Wednesday is designed to restore the derailed peace process in West Asia. Viewed against the background of a series of bomb blasts in Israel by the Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] terrorists claiming lives of more than 60 within a brief period of eight days beginning 25 February, the urgency in holding a summit meet is understandable. More important is the fact that the suicide bomb blasts by the Hamas in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, and Ashkelan had sent such shock-waves in Israel that the political standing of both the Israeli prime minister, Mr. Shimon Peres, and that of the Palestinian Authority president, Mr. Yasir 'Arafat, began to be questioned in a manner, which threatened the whole West Asian peace process. The danger was that unless bolstered on an international level, the peace process would be derailed and this in turn would fuel a wider conflagration not only in West Asia, but elsewhere too. Hence the need for holding an urgent summit meet.

India is virtually interested in the West Asian peace process for reasons more than one. It has diplomatic and other relations with all the Arab countries and Israel and has always supported the Palestinian cause and their legitimate demands. India condemns use of violence and terrorism as means to gain political ends. In fact, India has for long been a victim all through of terrorism, especially of terrorism inspired, abetted, and assisted from across its borders. India has so far tackled on its own this foreign- inspired terrorism from across its borders with varying degrees of success; but the havoc wrought by this type of state-sponsored terrorism is apparent in Afghanistan and even in the Central Asian state like Tajikistan. It now threatens peace in South, Southwest, and Central Asian regions. India and for that matter many others too would have appreciated, if President Bill Clinton and other leaders had acted with the same speed in regard to threats posed by terrorism in these regions. President Clinton's top priority at the Cairo summit convened by President Mubarak will be to revive the Middle East peace process and forge a united front against terrorism; however, Egypt's foreign minister, Mr. 'Amr Musa, has said that the one-day summit at Sharm al-Shaykh will not consider the controversial issue of radical fundamentalist asylum seekers who take refugee in Europe and elsewhere on human rights grounds. This halfway approach to tackling of terrorism does not augur well for the summit.

The Clinton administration has already taken steps to rally moderate Arab states to support Israel and to seek their help to isolate supporters of the Hamas organization. In the meanwhile, Israel has launched an all-out war on the Hamas with both Israeli and Palestinian security forces rounding up activists of Hamas. The aim is to put pressure on certain regimes that are supporting Hamas. This two-pronged policy may be well conceived, but it would be premature to forecast success simply because the fundamentalist terrorism is well entrenched. The Hamas has vowed to carry out more suicide bombings in defiance of a joint Israeli-PLO crackdown and the Cairo antiterrorism summit of world leaders; rather the Hamas movement has drawn strength from the vast network of Islamic mosques, madrasas [religious schools], clinics, and other social welfare institutions it has been receiving financial support from abroad. The effort of the summit would be to help in the task of curbing the fund raising efforts of the Hamas. What may appear as a contradiction is the fact that the USA continues to be the biggest source of funds for terrorist organizations like the Hamas. While uninvited hard-liner Islamic states like Libya, Sudan, Iraq, and Iran have denounced the summit in advance, Pakistan which now serves as the nerve center for the training and export of terrorism is attending the antiterrorism summit. How far such an apparent contradiction would help the summit at Sharm al-Shaykh to resolve terrorism and restore peace process in West Asia can be anybody's guess.

India: U.S., Pakistan Blamed for CTBT Problems

BK1203155196 Delhi NAVBHARAT TIMES in Hindi 11 Mar 96 p 6

[Article by Ranjit Kumar]

[FBIS Translated Text] The U.S. daily newspaper THE WASHINGTON POST has again published a mischievous news-report, attributing its sources to U.S. spy agencies. It claims Pakistan is preparing to conduct a nuclear test and will conduct a test should India do so. Two months ago, the same paper, again attributing its sources to U.S. spy agencies, published a similar report claiming India was preparing to conduct a nuclear blast. After the initial report the U.S. Administration both directly and indirectly threatened the Government of India, and warned that should India conduct a nuclear test, it would be subjected to economic and commercial restrictions. India has officially and categorically denied these reports, calling them false, yet neither the U.S. media nor the U.S. Administration desist from repeating their charges that India is about to conduct a nuclear test.

Clearly, the U.S. Administration is harming the drive for nuclear non-proliferation by having such false news reports published in one of the United States' leading dailies. These planted news items raise doubts in India regarding the honesty and sincerity of the United States in its drive for nuclear non-proliferation. The people of India see the dubious role the United States is playing in maintaining double standards concerning the nuclear issue. While it deliberately ignores Pakistan's nuclear program, it forces India to sign nuclear treaties. This is why the Government of India cannot imagine taking steps in which India might be seen bowing before to the U.S. command even at the cost of its national security interest.

The alleged photographs of the so-called activities in India's Pokaran region were taken to use as evidence of India's intentions to conduct a nuclear test. The same ruse was employed to demonstrate the alleged activities of the Pakistani engineers in the hills near the Pakistan border with Afghanistan. What is interesting is that Pakistan's activity toward conducting a nuclear test has been shown to be Pakistan's response to India's preparations for conducting a nuclear explosion. This is another attempt to blame India for Pakistan's preparations for a nuclear test. Since the accusatory finger is pointing at India, the U.S. Administration has not reacted to this 'disclosure' of Pakistan's intentions as it did when similar charges were framed on India. This time no attempt was made to sensationalize the news of Pakistan's alleged preparations for the test.

Indian defense observers are of the opinion that perhaps the U.S. Administration released this second report because the first report failed. Negotiations for the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) continue in Geneva, and India has shown a distinctly different attitude. India's attitude may jeopardize prospects of the CTBT and cause the talks to fail in Geneva. India was initially a great supporter of the CTBT, but having seen the attitude of the Western powers led by the United States, it has refused to sponsor this treaty. India's present stance has forced nuclear nations to pressure India to accept the treaty proposal as is. India maintains that the proposal for the CTBT is blatantly discriminatory and unless the nuclear powers can reach an agreement to destroy their nuclear weapons within a specific time-frame, this treaty is meaningless and irrelevant. India's firm stand has pushed the negotiations in Geneva to the brink of failure. That is the reason the nuclear powers are determined to force India to accept the proposed CTBT. They are employing a variety of ruses and measures to have India accept their demands. The alleged 'disclosure' of Pakistan to conduct a nuclear test ought to be seen in this perspective, for this disclosure is part of the U.S. tactics to pressure India. This alleged disclosure emphasizes that Pakistan is planning a nuclear test only to counter India's. This rider with the 'disclosure' clearly proves the U.S. attempts to pressure India indirectly by stressing that should Pakistan make the nuclear weapon what would India do in retaliation? India, however, is not confused about Pakistan's nuclear capability. This was stated by the Indian Foreign Minister Pranab Mukherjee in Parliament just last week. Pakistan has no need to conduct a nuclear test on its soil, because China can provide Pakistan with nuclear assistance. China can call Pakistan its strategic ally and can allow Pakistan to use its land to conduct a nuclear test, just as the United States allows Britain and Israel to conduct nuclear tests on its territory. There is no need for Pakistan to select a site in the hills adjoining Afghanistan's border to conduct a nuclear test. The so-called preparations by Pakistan to conduct the test is merely a bluffing threat to India, so if India is planning any such test, it must drop the idea. This also assists the U.S. goal to force India to change its stand on the CTBT.

The basic reason for India adopting this rigid stand on the CTBT is the partisan attitude of the Western powers, which deliberately turn a blind eye towards Pakistan's nuclear program while continuing to pressure India to shelve similar program. The Indian people are not in favor of joining the arms' race. They know that nuclear weapons are useless in South Asia. Even in an armed conflict with Pakistan, India is unlikely to use nuclear weapons. The radioactive radiations emitting from the nuclear weapons would affect the Indian population, because of the proximity of the two countries. When the Pakistani leadership loudly proclaims that its country possesses nuclear weapons and then the big nuclear powers turn a blind eye to Pakistan's nuclear ambitions, what options do the people of India have? It must pressure its government to produce nuclear weapons if only to instill fear in India's arch-rival. That is the main reason India opposes the CTBT and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, which are not only discriminatory, but by signing them India would forgo its nuclear option forever. If India agrees to sign these treaties it gives its people the impression that the government has wilted under U.S. pressure. No government worth its salt can allow its people to have this impression, especially when the general elections are just round the corner. Bowing to external pressure at this juncture would have a high political price. That is the reason for India's rigid stand on the CTBT proposal.

India: Government Urged To Warn Pakistan Against 'Meddling'

BK1303055796 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 13 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The former chief minister of Jammu and Kashmir, Dr. Farooq Abdullah, has urged the center to warn Pakistan against meddling in the internal affairs of India by supporting militant activities. Speaking at a function held to mark Mr. Y.B. Chavan's 83d birth anniversary in Mumbai [Bombay] yesterday, Dr. Abdullah said Kashmir is an integral part of India and the Kashmiris do not want Pakistan to rule over them.

In Jammu and Kashmir, some of the families of border areas of Rajaori and Punch have started returning to their homes after having undergone a lot of miseries in the Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. Narrating tales of their suffering, an army spokesman told newsmen at Nagrota yesterday that they had been lured by the agents of Pakistani intelligence agencies to cross over to the other side.

In a major breakthrough, the Punjab Police have arrested six hard-core Kashmiri militants from Kharaj police station area. The arrested militants belong to the Hizbul Mujahideen, the Jamaat-i- Islami, and the Rukn-i-Jamaat — a fringe fundamentalist wing of the Jamaat-i-Islami. Agencies quoting the senior superintendent of police of Ropar, Mr. R.P. Singh, report that the militants were holding a meeting to chalk out plans to escalate violence in the northern region.

India: Rao Rebuts Charge of Interference in Money Deal Case

BK1203164296 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 12 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The prime minister has categorically rebutted the charge of any interference in the CBI [Central Bureau of Investigation] investigations in the hawala [illegal money transfer] or any other case. Offering to be covered under the Lokpal [ombudsman], Mr. Narasimha Rao told the agitated opposition to address the question to the CBI whether he is under investigation or not, as the agency does not report to the prime minister on investigations. Responding to a pointed query on how some of those accused in the Jain diaries could find a place in his ministry, Mr. Rao said he does not seek any police report before inducting anyone into the ministry. He also assured the house that he would look into the suggestions made by Samata Party leader, Mr. George Fernandes, on electoral reforms.

Mr. Rao's clarifications came after a walkout by the National Front and left party members and leader of the opposition's reply to the debate on a motion on the hawala issue and the alleged pay off to some MP's. Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee expressed dissatisfaction to the intervention by the minister of state for personnel, Mrs. Margaret Alwa. Reiterating his charges, Mr. Vajpayee wanted to know whether the CBI is investigating the large deposits allegedly made by four JMM [Jharkhand Mukti Morcha] MP's into their accounts on the same day. He later led his members in the walkout.

Earlier, in her speech, Mrs. Margaret Alwa asserted that there has neither been any deliberate delay in the investigations nor attempts made to hush up the case. Rejecting the charge of selectivity in filing the charge sheets, Mrs. Alwa said the CBI had acted independently and did not take any direction from anyone in the government. The minister also asserted that no officer connected with the hawala investigations was moved out of the CBI. Recalling the progress in the investigations, Mrs. Alwa said the CBI made a detailed inquiry and sealed all the diaries and documents seized in the raids. The persistent allegation of hushing up the case was disproved when the agency produced all the documents before the Supreme Court in 1993. She also rejected a charge that one of the accused, B.R. Jain, traveled with the prime minister to Seoul in September 1993.

India: Commentary Notes 'Brightening Economic Outlook'

BK1303062996 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 13 Mar 96

[Commentary by A. Karuppaswamy]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The observation of the finance secretary that the fiscal deficit, that is the gap between the overall national income and expenditure, has come down to 6 percent conforms to his earlier assertion that the economic fundamentals are strong. Of course, 6 percent is still higher than 5 percent of the Gross Domestic Product considered ideal for a developing economy as ours. Still it is a modest recovery from 8.5 percent when the economic reforms were initiated. Mr. Montek Singh Ahluwalia is confident that the rate will further come down in the next five years. A similar view has been expressed by the finance minister who feels that there is no cause for worry in future.

There is no dearth of evidence that the reforms initiated in July 1991 have strengthened the Indian economy and have paved the way for accelerated growth in the years ahead. The GDP grew by 6.2 percent in 1994-95 [and the] rate of inflation has fallen sharply from 11 percent to below 5 and seems to have stabilized. There has been a significant growth in industry. The Central Statistical Organization estimates that the savings rate in the economy has touched an all-time record of 24.4 percent of GDP during last year, and correspondingly, the investment rate has perked up to 25.2 percent. It is widely believed in the industry circle that productivity in economy has also risen in the last three years, thanks to new investment and technology upgradation. If this is so, then the economy has firmly crossed the traditional threshold of a 5.5 percent rate of growth.

This brightening economic outlook is a dramatic revival from the sad experience the country experienced in 1993-94 when there was a significant decline of revenue, increased borrowing, and mounting expenditure. The fiscal deficit rose uncomfortably high to 60,257 crore rupees. The optimistic note expressed by the finance minister and secretary has the condition that the ongoing liberalization should continue.

First, economic reform policy must be consistent and credible devoid of political exigencies. Secondly, a balance of payment deficit must be seen as a potential danger, raising external debt. Thirdly, there is a certain danger that the movement toward capital account convertibility can prove too hasty and premature. While developing countries certainly needs to draw on foreign capital, it should not be seen as a replacement for domestic savings. Finally, for coping with volatile outflow of funds as it happened in the last two months, India should hold substantial foreign exchange.

Pruning of nonproductive government expenditure and enhancement of capital expenditure for creating revenue-yielding assets are the other compulsions. Above all, the managers of the Indian economy have to ensure that the domestic capital is not swamped by foreign capital as India progresses on the high path of growth.

Iran

Iran: Hashemi-Rafsanjani Holds News Conference

LD1203220996 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1609 GMT 11 Mar 96

[News conference by Iranian President 'Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani with domestic and foreign correspondents in Tehran on 11 March — recorded; translated from the superimposed Persian translation unless otherwise indicated]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Hashemi-Rafsanjani] I welcome all of you, ladies and gentlemen. Good morning to you all.

[Unidentified moderator] Thank you, Mr. President, for accepting a request of the foreign correspondents in Iran to hold a news conference. I also would like to thank all the domestic and foreign reporters. I would like to let you know that we have direct link-up with the CNN network. The reporters' questions and your answers will be translated by the interpreters into Persian and English so that the foreign reporters can follow the news conference. If you wish to say something before the news conference begins, we are prepared to listen; otherwise we start the questions.

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful. I prefer to allocate the time to the correspondents to raise their questions.

[Correspondent Sivash Qazi, from Geneva] Mr. President, the Majles election results for some constituencies have been announced. What is your evaluation of these results so far? Do you think that the Servants of Construction, which is the faction of your supporters, has won in these elections?

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] It is still early to judge. But in reply to your remarks that only the group, Servants of Construction, are my supporters, I would like to say that both the Militant Clergy Association and Servants of Construction are our friends. They are all my good colleagues in the government. Both groups, in their election campaign, declared support for the government programs.

[Correspondent] Your Excellency Mr. President, my name is Mas'ud Nia [words indistinct] What is the stance of the Islamic Republic of Iran in connection with the Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] group? Do you support or condemn their action?

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] We in principle oppose all acts of terrorism, committed by any group anywhere in the world. One should not condemn Hamas as a Palestinian movement, which is struggling to liberate its country. However, if an act of terrorism is committed, one should not accept it. Acts of terrorism will not solve any problem.

[Unidentified correspondent] Mr. President, Iran says it is against terrorism. America also says it is against terrorism, Israel says it is against terrorism and [Palestinian leader Yasir] 'Arafat says he is against terrorism; have you not asked yourself whether you are playing in a theater where everyone says the same thing?

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] Please ask this gentleman to stay near the microphone, perhaps he could answer my question. Have you asked the Americans why they are financing those who have confessed to planting bombs in Iran? How come they have representative offices and radio stations in the United States, France, Germany and other places?

[Correspondent] Is that the answer, Mr. President, to my question? I feel that you and every one else, who condemn terrorism, say something in front of television cameras and something else when you discuss the issue among yourselves?

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] When we say something, we are sincere. You cannot find even one instance of Iranian involvement in terrorism. However, you can see Israel is holding prisoners, whom it kidnapped from inside Lebanon and took to jail. An example is Ubayd. You can see the United States giving money to the terrorists. But you cannot find any example of Iranian participation in any act of terrorism. Whereas we have seen the most abject examples of terrorist actions committed against us. In this same building that you have gathered, a bomb was planted under this building, martyring our president [Raja'i] and prime minister [Bahonar]. We rebuilt the place later. Those same people are now in America and receive financial assistance.

[CNN correspondent Christiane Amanpour] Mr. President, Christiane Amanpour from CNN. Europe says that it wishes to continue its critical dialogue with Iran, but they are against Iran's policy. They are also against the official statements issued in support of Hamas. What do you think of this?

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] We agree with having dialogue with Europe. In fact we agree to have dialogue with anyone without any preconditions. But, if they say that we should condemn the Palestinian struggle, we are not going to do that. The Palestinian struggle is the right of an oppressed nation that has a few million refugees. We think that it is the duty of all noble human beings to support them. If you mean that we support their acts of violence, no, that is not the case, we do not support acts of violence in any form whatsoever.

[Amanpour] May I follow up quickly? You have just said that Iran itself has been a main victim of terrorism. But right now a number of Iranian nationals are being tried in European courts for being involved in the killing of people who opposed the Islamic Republic of Iran. Does the formal condemnation of terrorism by Iran mean that in future we should no longer see the killing of the opposition?

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] Do you remember a similar court in France? Please answer me. [pauses] What was the outcome of the trial which was held in France recently? [turns to aide] She cannot understand what I am saying, she is not wearing her headphones. Could you please translate it for her?

[Interpreter, in English] Recently there was a trial [words indistinct] in Paris. What was the result of that court? The decision of the court?

[Amanpour, in English] I am not exactly sure right now. There are Iranians on trial in Germany for instance.

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] No, I mean there was a similar trial in France, what was the outcome of that trial?

[Interpreter, in English] In France there was a court trial...

[Amanpour, in English] I do not hear very well. I am sorry.

[Interpreter, in English] In France there was a trial for the assassination of Bakhtiar.

[Amanpour, in English] I think they were acquitted.

[Interpreter, in Persian] They were acquitted.

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] You see that these courts...

[Amanpour, interrupting, in English] But there is also a court proceeding, I think going on in Germany.

[Interpreter] There is a similar trial going on in Germany

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] What I want to say is that these trials are usually held for propaganda purposes in order to prepare propaganda fodder for the media. God willing, very soon you will also see that the same thing happening in Germany, that is of course if the courts show their goodwill.

[Hazavi] Hello. I am Mohammad Hazavi from KEYHAN. My question is: In view of people's extensive participation in the elections, in your opinion, how could such great potential be used to resolve the country's economic and cultural problems?

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] We can over come any problem with the participation of the Majles, the government, and the people. Fortunately, there is no unresolved economic-cultural problem in Iran and the country's affairs are satisfactory.

[Hazavi] I have another question about the elections. How do you assess the results of the fifth round of Majles elections and the political tendency of the future Majles?

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] I am optimistic about the results of the elections. I think we will have an efficient Majles with diversity of opinions, which will cooperate very well with the government.

[Unidentified correspondent, in Arabic] In your speeches, you are saying that the economic indicators are strong. But speaking to the people, they say that living standards have deteriorated and their purchasing power has reduced in the past three years. What is your opinion?

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] I don't know to whom you talked. We speak about accurate statistics which show that the people's purchasing power has increased. These are based on data. You can check our official data and if you have more time you can visit different parts of Iran and you will see that in every corner of Iran the economy is developing and people are happy. (?An example of this) is the elections in which around 25 million people participated with enthusiasm and fervor.

[Unidentified correspondent, in English] Iranians say that they have to work in more than one job at one time.

[Interpreter] He says: Iranians say that they have to work hard to manage their life.

[Correspondent, interrupting, in English] They have to have two or more jobs.

[Interpreter] They have to have two or three jobs in order to manage their daily life.

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] Perhaps they will have to work hard. It is not possible for me to confirm. You can see, however, that all the people work. We have provided employment to two million Afghans and Iraqis in our country. Everyone lives in a good condition.

[Griffin] Jennifer Griffin with National Public Radio in Washington. Last year the U.S. imposed an economic embargo against Iran. If there were no such sanctions against Iran, would you have supported the U.S. investment in Iran and direct trade link with that country?

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] Yes. We did have trade cooperation despite the fact that there were some objections in Iran to it, however, we did not stop it. The last event was an investment by CONOCO oil company in Iran which we had also accepted it. Of course, now that the Americans have cut it off, we feel that we are finding a better alternative than America.

[IRNA correspondent] Mr. President, in view of the fact that most of the questions that have been asked by the esteemed foreign journalists and reporters up to now have been about terrorism and attributing acts of terrorism to the Islamic Republic of Iran, and on the other hand, we have heard that recently Iran has embarked on international cooperation in the campaign against terrorism, and there is a plan at the present time with the Russian Federation for this very purpose, What is your comment, Mr. President?

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] Well, yes, very recently we received a message from President Yeltsin, in which he asked Iran and the Russian Federation to take the initiative to organize a congress to fight terrorism in practice and not in the form of chanting opportunistic slogans. We are also negotiating with Germany to have a joint cooperation with the German Government in this field as well. We have felt deeply the bitter effects of terrorism and we are ready to receive any country or organization ready to embark on anti-terrorism activities sincerely with us.

[Correspondent] Mr. President, so many Iranians I have seen and talked with who want to see you, Mr. President, remain in power and continuing your job of constructing Islamic Iran. Do you do wish to do something to stay in power longer, by changing the constitution's law?

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] No, I really do not deem it expedient to change the country's constitution just to enable one person to continue his work in a position of authority. I believe that whoever succeeds me, he will be able to work very well with the framework set by the first and the second five-year development plans. This is a movement that we have embarked upon for the construction of the country and it will not be stopped. I will be serving the people in Iran anyway and will be helping any government which succeeds me.

[Rowhaninezhad] I am Rowhaninezhad from the Voice and Vision of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Your excellency, accusing the Islamic Republic of Iran of supporting terrorism is an old issue. It has failed time and again, and many cases have proved that Western claims in this regard are baseless. Why do you think that they still continue to use such a ploy, and how long can such a ploy be effective?

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] This is, in any case, an enemy weapon to dig up an issue and use it against the other side through accusations. I know that no matter how many times they fail, they still create a new issue. In the case of America, you saw how it used the explosion in Argentina and brought up the case of [Iranian dissident] Manuchehr Mo'tamar; we did say that this person was a fugitive swindler. They did not pay any attention to that. Now, the same person has been detained in America and being prosecuted for the same offense that he committed in Iran; he has been involved in theft. That was a source of disgrace for America.

The Americans who, in their parliament, allocate 20 million dollars against Iran, better deserve to be accused of terrorism, and we now know that that money is being given to the Monafeqin [hypocrites, Mojahedin-e Khalq, MKO] and other terrorist groups. They cannot use such a weapon, but, in any case, it is the enemy and we cannot tell the enemy what to do, they should decide for themselves.

[Correspondent] Hello Mr. Hashemi. I am from Japan's ASAHI daily. Japan has not followed the U.S. embargo against Iran. The reason was that a moderate is the president of the Islamic Republic of Iran. In view of the fact that Iran is a vast market for Japan, the Japanese businessmen and investors are anxious about when Your excellency's terms of office ends next year? What is your opinion?

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] In response, we have not supported the Aum [Shinrikyo] faction for the sake of supporting the Japanese Government. And Japan is our good friend and is a good colleague. We are willing to work more with the Japanese.

Although I can see that America has put considerable pressure on Japan and Japan is vulnerable to pressure by some extent, however, the Japanese maintain the international standards. We thank them for it.

[Correspondent] Your Eminence, Mr President, I am from TIME magazine. What, in your opinion, is the main aim of the summit meeting in Sharm al-Shaykh in Egypt, due to be held on Wednesday [13 March], and what impact will it have on Iran?

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] Since the conference is being masterminded by the United States, we do not expect anything valuable to come out of it. I just see it as a propaganda measure, because people who support terrorism themselves will not be able to come up with a good practical program there.

[Naji] Mr. Rafsanjani, I am Kasra Naji, from the BBC World Service. I would like to ask you a question about yesterday's decision by the ministers of the European Union. They decided yesterday that they would ask Iran to condemn terrorism explicitly and to refrain from doing anything that would undermine the Middle East peace process. I would like to ask you what Iran's reply is to these two specific demands by the European Union and, especially, with regard to the second part, is Iran prepared to accept not to do anything to undermine the peace process?

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] Let me reply to both parts in advance so that the Europeans will not have to take the trouble to make the journey. From the theoretical point of view, we do not agree with what is now taking place in the name of peace, because it is not a just peace and we know that the rights of the Palestinians are being trampled underfoot. Without the determination of what is to become of several million refugees who are outside Israel — in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and so on, all burning with love for their homeland and living as displaced people — no sensible and right minded person could believe that any peace can be lasting on this basis. As for the practical point of view, we have said from the start: We will really not do anything disruptive. You cannot find a single instance in which Iran has sabotaged this same half-baked so-called peace. However, those powerful gentlemen of the world do not have enough broad-mindedness to be able to tolerate any view opposed to their own on such an important issue. This narrow-mindedness and intolerance is, in my opinion, truly regrettable in big leaders who wish to run the world. People who claim to wish to reform the world should be broad-minded enough to listen to different viewpoints, and respond to arguments. They will not solve anything by just accusing Iran of being a hard-liner or interfering.

We describe reality as we see it. If these same people set about drawing up a thorough peace plan, you will see that Iran will cooperate with them. Of course, if the gentlemen wish to come to Iran, we are willing. Let them be so kind as to come and we will hold talks with them.

[Unidentified correspondent] Mr. Rafsanjani, I have another question about this same issue of relations with Europe. I have the feeling that, on the whole, Iran wishes to see its relations with Europe strengthened and improved so that this will prevent perhaps, in some way, as you put it, the excesses of the United States. I would like to know whether you have taken any specific new decision regarding the improvement of ties with Europe. For example, on Salman Rushdie?

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] You said, in my words.

[Correspondent] I meant the leaders of the country.

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] No, let us say me myself. Do you, as a journalist who is familiar with what goes on in the world, not accept that the United States is really going too far?

[Correspondent] I do accept that, well, the United States does sometimes go too far.

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] Sometimes?

[Correspondent] Yes, sometimes.

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] Yes, we really do want to cooperate with Europe, with any country except Israel and the United States, for the time being. We want to be on friendly terms. The United States, too, well — the United States is a large country, a legitimate country. There is nothing wrong with working with them. However, when Mr. Clinton wears the Zionists' cap when dictating terms and conditions to Iran, it is clear that such a government cannot really work with us. But, with all other countries, we are prepared to work with all of them. We are willing to cooperate sincerely with them.

[Correspondent] The Salman Rushdie issue?

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] On Salman Rushdie, my view is that this is something that the Europeans themselves, especially Britain, deliberately wish to keep unresolved. The issue of Salman Rushdie was really not an important one. They blew it up. The decree issued by the Imam [Khomeyni], the fatwa exists in all the books relating to religious jurisprudence going back one thousand years. He said something based on what is written in a book, in books. It is an Islamic, jurisprudential view. It is accepted by the majority of Islamic jurisprudents. The issue was not one of implementation at all. It was the Europeans themselves who sensationalized it. They are still not allowing it to be resolved. We really do not think it is a good idea to spend so much time on this issue.

[Sajjadi] Your Excellency, I am Sajjadi from the IRAN NEWS newspaper. My question is on the meeting in

Egypt about the issue of terrorism, on Wednesday [13 March]. We heard in the news that Mr. [Boris] Yeltsin is apparently carrying a message on your behalf to this meeting. Could you please comment on this and also, what are your expectations from our European allies — Germany and other countries — at this meeting.

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] What was the first question, Mr. Sajjadi?

[Sajjadi] It seems that he is carrying a message from Your Excellency to the meeting.

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] No, I have not given a message but only a reply to his suggestion. Mr. Yeltsin had suggested that we should organize a congress on anti-terrorism and I told him that I agree that we should talk. Now, concerning the second issue?

[Sajjadi] What are your expectations from our European allies at these sessions?

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] We expect everything to be dealt with in a fair manner. They should discuss the serious issues that concern the world in a sincere manner and take effective decisions, as responsible people, to resolve the world's problems, including those of the Middle East.

[Sajjadi] Thank you, Mr. President. If you permit me, I shall ask a last question, in fact, it may be a repetition, but let me complete my question. Regarding the elections for the fifth Majles and the predictions that, it seems the candidates of the Servants of Construction are gaining more votes. Now, there is talk and rumor in political circles that if the Servants of Construction gain the upper hand in the fifth Majles, they intend to introduce a bill aimed at retaining your position as president. Please, could you tell us more about this rumor?

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] I think that this rumor was also part of an election campaign rumor — whoever started it. To put an end to it, I should say that, no, I shall not accept any change [in the constitution], not even if it is ratified. I shall not accept it because I believe that it is not in the interest of the country to do this.

[Al-Siyufi] I am correspondent Ahmad al-Siyufi from the Egyptian AL-SHA'B newspaper. Your Excellency, Mr. President, there are some reports from the Western bloc that some economic and perhaps military threats will be adopted against Iran. And, at the same time, Israel has accused Iran of being responsible for the recent operations in occupied Palestine. If, God forbid, these threats are serious and will be taken up, what is your policy in response to this?

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] I think that the eight-year war imposed on us when almost all arrogant powers supported Iraq, was an experience that taught the world that it is not very expedient to attack the Islamic Republic, and that no one would dare repeat this experience. Iran, today, is truly strong enough to defend its interests against whoever is standing on the other side.

[Hozuri] Your Excellency: This is Tawfiq Hozuri from MBC television, which is owned by Arabistan, and broadcasts from London. There is a belief in the world that your foreign policy is not received very well by the foreign public opinion. You have, however, a more clear viewpoint regarding the Arab region. What are the future prospects for your relations with Saudi Arabia?

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] I really do not know what causes this gentleman's doubt and uncertainty. We really want to have the best kind of relations with all Arab states, including Saudi Arabia. We will do our utmost to deepen our friendship. Of course there are elements outside the region, such as the Americans, who do not favor the development of this friendship. We believe it is their procrastination which impedes this process.

I want to make it absolutely clear here that Iran warmly welcomes any Arab country that wants to have friendly ties with us.

[Correspondent] I am from CORRIERE DELLA SERA. If I have understood correctly, you said that Iran supports the struggles of Hamas but condemns bombings and other acts of terrorism. If this is correct, then would you arrest Hamas and Islamic Jihad members who might happen to be Iran?

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] We said that we accept [qabul mikonim] the rightful struggles of the Palestinians, but we do not support them in practice. They have not asked us for any help. You have probably heard recent reports stating that an important base of their support is in fact in England, and that a new and important investigation into this affair is currently in progress there. We will arrest any person, anywhere in our country, if he is proven to be a criminal according to an international yardstick. However, we are not prepared to cooperate with anybody to further Israel's interests.

[Correspondent] [Word indistinct] from AL- HAYAH newspaper published in London in Arabic. Relations between Iran and Egypt are now at the level of the interests' sections and cooperation between the two countries in international organizations. In your opinion, what is the problem preventing the establishment of full diplomatic ties between the two countries?

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] At the present moment, I consider cooperation between Iran and Egypt to be to the advantage of the world of Islam, of the Arab world and of the Third World. There is a psychological obstacle. It was the Egyptians who created Camp David, breaking the grandeur of the struggle against Israel and creating a rift within the united ranks of Arab and Muslim countries. We consider this to be a grave offense. However, this does not mean that we must have no ties or limited ties with Egypt forever. We must work with Egypt. I am trying to improve our relations myself.

[Mohsenzadeh] In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful. I am Mohsenzadeh from AKHBAR newspaper. Some people have attributed the title leader of construction to Your Eminence and some others believe in the implementation of social justice before construction and development. In Your Eminence's opinion, what has been done so far in terms of construction and development and which is more important — development or social justice?

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] The slogan, the title you said was attributed to me is not really deserved. I believe that it is really the people who are doing this and the country's managers. I am just one of them. However, I have to say that a very great deal has been done in Iran. Iran has really changed enormously in these past seven years.

I really wish that the reporters who are in Iran now would travel to Iran's distant corners a bit to see the roads, power stations, dams, massive steel and aluminum plants, cement plants, infrastructural industries, car factories and so on; mines that have always been abandoned in Iran and are active today. Let them see the state of health and medical treatment. We have medical clinics, schools, water, electricity, telephones, roads, and jobs in all our villages. Agriculture is active. Fishing is active. Gas pipelines are being laid rapidly throughout this big country and electricity is being taken everywhere.

Truly, Iran has been turned into a great workshop. When we submitted our budget bill to the Majles this year, we presented a very impressive figure: The sum of 137 trillion rials of which 42 percent is for development. There has never been so much construction in Iran. I believe that this was a natural process in Iran in view of the independence it has gained, in view of its needs after the war. It is now carrying this development out, as well as other things which are less apparent: The issue of strengthening our military foundation, providing our defense needs domestically, the construction of refineries, the construction of petrochemical centers, fully managing the country's petrochemical, oil and gas industries, fully-managing shipbuilding industries, port building, dam building, and power station building.

We are now a car manufacturing country. Before, we used to import all the parts. Iran is really worth seeing now. However, unfortunately, the propaganda in the world and some propaganda at home does not wish to take these realities into account. Iran's conditions as they are today will become known to the entire world one day and I will witness that. Let me give one example, the Japanese were our partners in a petrochemical project. They abandoned it without any justification and left. They inflicted one billion's worth of damage on us, one billion dollars. Then, we built that plant ourselves with that one billion dollars [as heard] and we are producing 3.5 tonnes of precious petrochemical products today, and we went on to build two more plants of the same kind.

God willing, one day we will be able to exploit the great potential that exists in Iran for the benefit of ourselves and others who wish to gain from the efforts of our people and to cooperate with us.

[Moderator] They still have many questions to ask. Would you allow more time for them to ask a few more questions?

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] Yes, why not.

[Correspondent] I am [word indistinct] from Belgium radio and television. The Islamic Republic of Iran condemns terrorism. The European authorities will come to Iran in the next few days and will ask you to do more than just condemning the terrorism. My question is: What is the relation between Islam and Hamas? The Iranian government is seen as an Islamic source by many of the world Muslims, especially the Palestinians.

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] What is (?our) relationship with Hamas?

[Correspondent] Relation between Islam and Hamas.

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] I can not describe what relation Hamas has with Islam. If their members are Muslims, then their relations with Islam will be like our relations with Islam and other Muslims' relations with Islam — that is, to follow the Koran. I think it is the duty of each Muslim to support justice and support what is right and to struggle against oppression and injustice.

[Correspondent] I am from the SALAM daily. I have two brief questions: In reply to a question raised by CNN, you said that you are ready to negotiate with anyone who wants to negotiate with Iran without any preconditions. Do your comments also include the U.S. Government?

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] The precondition for the United States is to prove its good intention. We presently doubt the United States' good intentions.

[Correspondent] In your opinion, what are the characteristics of these good intentions?

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] I just mentioned it as an example. As a sign of good intentions, the United States should release our assets which have been frozen unjustly in the United States.

[Correspondent] My second question is that you have repeatedly said that you were not going or willing to become a candidate for another presidential term. Will you return to the Majles for another term? Will you try to form a political party to continue the movement that you have built?

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] It is too early to talk about the future. I still have one-and-a-half years to work in this post. Those decisions will be made after one-and-a-half years.

[Amanpour] This is Christiane Amanpour, again, from CNN. People say, and you say yourself, that you would like women to play a greater part in social affairs. Yet, we can still see women being harassed and bothered — for instance when it concerns the hejab [Islamic dress]. And there are some people in Iran who have helped to slow down the reforms and changes in Iran. What will be the outcome of these splits and discord now evident in Iran considering that there is going to be a new parliament and government?

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] Regarding women, yes, we are really sincere in wanting women to take part in social affairs. And we are encouraging them to do so. But your interpretation was that women were being harassed - the hejab as an issue, for instance. We do not see the hejab as something that bothers women - to the extent that we think it necessary. Of course, you may have a specific type of hejab in mind. But, to the extent that we think it necessary - we believe it is in the interest of women. Where we differ with others is that we cannot approve of vulgar behavior on the part of women. Otherwise, on the rest of the issues, we think alike.

[Correspondent] Good day from Japan's NHK radio and television network. For some time now the government of Japan has delayed paying the second installment of the loan for the Karun Dam-4, in spite of the an agreement. Will there be some talks to follow up this issue? And, if the second loan is not paid in time, how will the contractors involved in this project be paid? Will Iran demand compensation from the Japanese government?

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] The talks are continuing though there has been delay on the part of Japan. The second installment is related to the power station. There were supposed to be two power stations, one of them a 1000 MW station which the Japanese are constructing with us and the other which we are building by ourselves. We have started building the latter. The first part of it is the shell of the dam. They have paid the loan for this and it is being built. There won't be any problems and we hope it will never reach the courts.

[Correspondent] Your Eminence, Mr. President, I am [words indistinct]. Will the changes brought about in the course of the Majles elections, with the coming into existence of different factions — based on the initial election results — have any impact on Iran's foreign policy or on its domestic policy, such as economic matters?

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] You asked whether change in the Majles would have any effect. The Majles is bound to have an effect on all these issues. The Majles is, at any rate, a place that can affect policies considerably here. Our Majles has a serious effect on the country's affairs.

[Unidentified correspondent] Mr. Hashemi, if I may, I would also like to ask a question. The issue that is always raised regarding Middle East affairs is that Iran is opposed to the current peace, but we have not heard anywhere or from anyone what proposal would be acceptable to Iran. In other words, what is the plan that Iran can accept as a solution to the issue of Palestine and to the problems of the Middle East? You briefly suggested that the Jews, Muslims, and Christians can live in a unified country. Is this a practical proposal?

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] No-one has asked us to present a proposal. We cannot propose a plan for a country that has nothing to do with us. However, our idea is that, if a real solution is to be found, it would have to be a solution whereby Jews, Muslims, and Christians would be able to live freely all together. A government based on a single ethnic group cannot resolve problems there. If it should ever be the case that a serious debate is raised and we are asked to do so, we are willing to turn our proposal into a practical plan.

[Correspondent] I am [words indistinct] Your Eminence, Mr. President, can you give any guarantee that, after these elections, we will see free political parties in Iran, and not just the present factions?

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] There is really no obstacle preventing the formation of free parties within the framework of the existing system in Iran now. If you are thinking about something beyond this system, then, no, I think there is no possibility of that in Iran. However, as far as the people who accept the constitution and this system are concerned, they can really have parties. They can really participate in political affairs and we would welcome this.

[Correspondent] Hello. I am from HAMSHAHRI daily. What is your opinion about Iraq's domestic developments? In view of the reports that there are possibilities for plans aimed that country's disintegration, could you please tell us your views and Iran's policy on this?

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] Possibilities for what?

[Correspondent] For Iraq's disintegration. [words indistinct]

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] This is your second question?

[Correspondent] Yes.

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] We have declared our views on Iraq. We are not in favor of Iraq's disintegration. Of course the Iraqi situation is difficult. The difficulties lie in the fact that the reins [sar reshteh] are in the hands of the Americans. They must decide how to resolve the issue in Iraq. We think it a remote possibility if they will make a decision to be in the interests of the Iraqi people. They are following other interests.

[HAMSHAHRI correspondent] What is your view about the implementation methods of this round of the elections?

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] Elections?

[Correspondent] The elections to the fifth term of the Majles.

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] They were held in accordance with the law. I am pleased about their implementation. They were really held with full freedom, as well as there was a sufficient election campaign, which informed people. Competition was also serious. The Ministry of Interior acted within the framework of the law. The Guardian Council also supervised them very well. I think the elections were held in accordance with good international standards. Of course some people might not agree with the preliminary selection process which took place to determine the credibility. This is another issue which should be discussed separately.

[Correspondent] Thank you very much.

[Moderator] Thank you very much Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani. [words indistinct]

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] Some of the reporters are standing and want to ask questions. [words indistinct]

[Correspondent] I am [words indistinct] from Egypt. I have two questions. First, the general climate of the country is moving towards [the formation of] political parties. What is Your Eminence's view about this? Do you think that this is really the case? My second question: The latest news about the election speaks of fierce rivalry between Fa'ezeh Hashemi, Your Eminence's daughter, and Mr. Nateq-Nuri, the eminent Majles speaker, in terms of votes for the Majles. What does this mean to you — both because she is a woman and because she is your daughter?

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] With respect to parties, I, too, feel that, in these elections, many people have been encouraged to move towards the formation of parties. As for the relationship you were speaking about, I do not think that either of those two entered the field with the idea of this kind of rivalry. This is how it turned out. Of course, Mr. Nateq-Nuri is one of our good, like-minded friends. As for Fa'ezeh, well, she is my daughter. This is an election and the result will reflect the votes of the people. The result is the people's choice. Later, too, they will work together in the Majles. They will not have disagreements.

[Correspondent] I am [words indistinct], from LA VANGUARDIA. Mr. President, do you think that the sanctions imposed by the United States have created problems in the daily lives of the Iranian people?

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] I really wish you would go around Tehran a little bit for yourself, the big shops; and then to development and construction centers. Look at the facts and figures on Iran. You will see that the Americans have not been able to inflict the slightest harm on Iran. Quite the contrary, we sensed that we had a serious dispute on our hands and we took certain precautions in our programs. Our work has become more solid and consolidated than the days before the American embargo. We have fixed the exchange rate. You can see that, for the past seven, eight months or more, it has been steady; even in London, New York, and such places, regarding the exchange rate. There is real stability in the Iranian economy. We can sell whatever amount of oil we need to sell. And we can do any oil-related work, development work, we need to — perfectly well. The United States made a mistake. It only made itself look bad.

[Fazel] Mr. President, I hope you are not too tired. I am Fazel from KAR VA KARGER. Existing statistics show that our country will face an unemployment problem within the next two or three years, due to the active growth of the population. On the other hand, in your speeches in the past few months, Your Excellency has been emphasizing the need to remove poverty, provide people's essential requirements and implement social programs. What are the main policies of Your Excellency's government on removing poverty and providing employment?

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] Naturally it needs a long discussion. [Turning to moderator] It doesn't need translation, does it?

[Moderator] No.

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] I don't see any reason why people should be unemployed in Iran. We are presently implementing huge projects. If someone wants to carry out real work, there is room for it. For example agriculture is rapidly growing and we are expanding a pressurized irrigation system that includes irrigation by sprinklers, by using rain water and [word indistinct]. This is a revolution in agriculture which will provide employment for a large number of people.

We have allocated 200,000 hectares of land in the southern sea shore for shrimp breeding. This is a considerable step which is taken to provide employment and bring in foreign currency. It is currently operational and people are employed there.

There are handicraft industries in Iran. If someone wants to work they can do so. The proceeds from selling a hand-woven carpet is enough to manage a family in Iran. Producing a hand-woven carpet only needs an investment of 150,000 tomans and three months of training. The training is provided by the [Construction] Jehad.

There is employment in the mining industries. We are rapidly equipping ore and other various mines. Anyone who wants to work can go there. We will give them a loan, too.

There are a number of people who prefer to work in an office and receive a civil service salary. It might not be possible for us to provide work for them. If they want to work in the production sector then there is work for them.

You can see that even an Afghani can find employment in Iran. Wherever, we travel in Iran we see that people are looking for workers. In my Rafsanjan, people are looking for workers and bring them from Zabol in order to work for them. Employment can be provided in Iran.

Poverty can be removed through this. My principal solution is to first create employment to remove poverty. If providing employment did not solve the problem of poverty, then we can pay them through social insurance programs. You will see the program that we want to present to the Majles, God willing.

[Fazel] I have another question. The changing structure of the Majles is obvious from now. The statistics available show that only one-third of the present deputies will be elected for the fifth terms. In your view, how this will influence Your Excellency's policies during the next few years if the Majles structure changes?

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] Both groups, who were leading in the elections, were supporting my policies. As they have said it in their slogans, I think my construction policies will be strengthened.

A small group was giving slogans and were campaigning for amendments in economic policies. They almost did not receive any votes. They have no support. The extreme left has some problem in Iran.

[Correspondent] I am Ralph (Chosey) from UPI. Mr. President, Iran has repeatedly said that the Islamic Republic of Iran has been a victim of terrorism. In the past 17 years, it seems as if there was a war going on between the ruling leaders in Iran and opposition groups. Of course, the president and prime minister of the country were killed by terrorist actions. But, a number of opposition leaders and top ranks of the MKO were killed in Turkey and other countries. The media say that Iran has links with Hamas and Islamic Jihad. How do you plan to get rid of this image that Iran supports terrorism?

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] Those who were killed abroad were probably the victims of internal purges. They are merciless this lot; they kill each other when differences develop between them. They were like this in Iran before the revolution — they used to kill each other.

You have not found one instance, so far, to indicate that Iran has been involved. Naturally, a suspicion may arise that Iran has been involved. But we really have not. We have no need to go abroad to kill anyone. They are also inside the country but we leave them alone.

Regarding Hamas and Islamic Jihad — how many times should I repeat it? We approve of what they are doing as a national struggle to save their country. We do not have anything further to do with them.

[Naji] This is Kasra Naji from the Persian [pauses] BBC World Service. Mr. Rafsanjani: I wanted to ask you whether you and the other Iranian leaders are really aware of the present dangers facing Iran; that is to say the recent pressures by America and Israel and their threats to intensify sanctions on Iran. I am also talking about the warning yesterday by the EU, which threatened to sever its ties with Iran.

Moreover, I am referring to the danger that these countries might take the issue to the UN Security Council and subject Iran to the same type of sanctions that they have imposed on Iraq. The issue is very serious. My question is: What have the Iranian leaders done about this? Do they not agree that these issues need a series of serious decisions?

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] If by serious decisions you mean succumbing to America, then I must say that this will never happen in Iran, because this revolution was created with the aim of ensuring that Iran is a free Islamic country which does not succumb to America or any other country for that matter. However, it seems that they do not want this. That is to say they do not want us to be Muslims in the way that we understand Islam, and they also want Iran to be a safe haven for America and other countries, just as it was in the past. But that era is now over, and the Iran of today is a strong and independent country in military, economic and cultural fields.

New circumstances have made the situation better than before. America believed that it would be able to dominate the entire globe after the collapse of communism. It imagined that it could take up the role of the guardian of the whole world. But the opposite has happened. You see today that together with the Russians and our other northern neighbors, we are a strong entity. The situation in the world is now such that threatening a country like Iran is not that simple. I believe that if one day Iran were to become an insecure place, then many countries of the world, too, will be rendered insecure. There will be so much insecurity in the region and in other parts of the world that America will be rendered helpless [sentence as heard].

Making threats does not constitute a solution. They should instead present a logical argument about what they want from us. You see that whatever America says about us today is proven to be a lie on the morrow. If they want to put pressure on us on the basis of these lies, then how can we begin to convince them?

When there is a bomb explosion in Israel, the pressure is immediately put on Iran. Our leader said a couple of days ago that we deplore terrorism. They did not pay any attention to these words. However, when one of our news agency employees — who was an Indian national — wrote and published an article in Greece, then they created all this hue and cry and claimed that Iran supports and condones these acts. This shows that they are merely looking for excuses, and making decisions on such a basis cannot be very effective.

If a certain logic existed and they sat down and talked on that basis, then things would move forward.

I would now like to thank all journalists present here, both Iranians and foreigners. I would also to thank all our guests who took the trouble of coming to Iran and seeing our elections. I welcome you all to Iran. I hope that you would be able to reflect only the realities that you saw here. I expect nothing more. I do not expect you to act against your belief and defend Iran. I only expect you to reflect the realities you saw and grasped so as to put the records right for the world public opinion. I expect you to do this regardless of whether it will benefit or harm us. We do not expect anything more from you. Thanks again.

Iran: Commentary Views Peacemakers Summit

LD1303135696 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1103 GMT 13 Mar 96

[Station Commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Sharm al-Shaykh international conference opened on the coast of the Red Sea today in the presence of political representatives from 30 countries, including the United States, as well as European and some Middle Eastern countries. This is the first summit meeting of its kind being held with the aim of strengthening the process of compromise in the Middle East.

By hosting the conference, Egypt is trying to raise its regional profile in relation to advancing the process of compromise. This is a sign of the fringe interests being pursued by the conference participants.

Syria, Libya, Iraq, and Lebanon have refused to attend the conference because they believe that it is being held merely in line with the interests of the United States and the Zionist regime. Combatant groups in Lebanon and the occupied territories have also issued separate statements, expressing regret that Western circles are not able to distinguish between their defensive struggles and aggressive attacks which are described as acts of terrorism, and condemning the conference.

Equating defensive struggles with acts of terrorism not only contravenes the right to self-defense as stipulated in the UN Charter, but is also an indication of the regressive nature of contemporary societies' political behavior; something which is extremely regrettable in societies that claim to be developed.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, which more than any other country has been a victim of terrorist attacks and which is currently exposed to terrorist attacks again following the approval of a $20 million budget by the U.S. Congress for interference in Iran, welcomes any international effort aimed at preventing acts of terrorism. Despite this, it is not at all optimistic about the outcome of today's conference, which is being held in Egypt in the name of fighting terrorism, because of the presence there of the Zionist regime, which is itself the leader of state terrorism, and because it is being directed by the United States, which has no better record than the Zionist regime.

In view of all this, it is not likely that the conference will be able to achieve a positive outcome regarding the presentation of a comprehensive program for preventing terrorist activities which would protect the interests of all human societies. In fact, the presentation of a definition of terrorism dictated by the United States, which only meets its interests, is one of the main obstacles casting a shadow over the outcome of this conference. Even the participants themselves do not have a unified conception of the meaning of terrorism. While Western countries consider one of the main bases for identifying an act of terrorism as its contravention of the principles of democracy defined by them, some of the Arab countries participating in the conference have a different viewpoint, seeing any effort, even aimed at establishing western style democracy, as an act of terrorism.

Despite these differences, the countries participating in the conference agree on the need to adopt measures aimed at stemming the growth of Islamic movements in the Middle East and this is, in fact, considered to be one of the main aims behind the Sharm al-Shaykh conference.

Nevertheless, political analysts see the conference more as a propaganda measure by the designers of the process of compromise, aimed at saving the Zionist regime from the whirlpool into which it has sunk, at which efforts are being made to gain international backing for that regime's aggressive policies and actions so that it can escalate its suppression of Palestinian strugglers.

Iran: Radio Comments on Peacemakers Conference

NC1303072996 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0445 GMT 13 Mar 96

[Commentary by the News Research and Commentary Group]

[FBIS Translated Text] Representatives from 30 countries are to meet in Sharm al-Shaykh in Egypt to discuss ways to confront terrorism. America, European countries, the Zionist regime, and the Middle East countries are participating in the conference, which enjoys the decisive support and backing of America and the Zionist regime. Clinton has said that the Sharm al-Shaykh conference will ensure America's long-term objectives and will help to strengthen the Zionist regime.

The major efforts of the conference will actually focus on how to condemn the Palestinian groups' combatant efforts which are threatening the Zionist regime and to find a way to confront these efforts. While pro-American countries are participating in this conference, countries that doubt the soundness of America's assertions about the establishment of peace in the Middle East and about confronting terrorism are boycotting it. Syria, Lebanon, Sudan, and Libya are among these countries. This group of countries considers the Sharm al-Shaykh conference not to be aimed at confronting terrorism, but at justifying the criminal operations by the Zionist regime.

The leaderships in these countries believe that by convening a conference like this, America and the Zionist regime are trying to portray acts by the combatant Palestinian groups as terrorist acts and, by defining it this way, to justify opposition to these acts in any possible way. This is actually tantamount to giving the Zionist regime a license to continue unhindered its suppressive and aggressive acts in the occupied territories, the self-rule area, and southern Lebanon.

Generally speaking, with the phrase "confrontation with terrorism" in the Middle East, America and the Zionist regime have in mind confrontation with Islamic struggle. Since they consider such struggle to be against the compromise process, they are seeking justification for crushing it so that the chain of events envisaged for the fulfillment of the American peace plan can be completed.

The compromising governments that have ignored their own national interests and opposed their own people in order to serve American plans consider it necessary to support America's acts in order to preserve their own strength. These governments consider fundamentalism to be their major enemy and are trying to coordinate with and keep in step with America in confronting fundamentalism.

Acceptance of the American and Zionist definition of terrorism could result in the regional countries using their resources to confront the Islamic groups and to prevent the propagation of Islamic values. But in view of the influence that the Islamic groups have on the region's people and their steadfast adherence to Islamic principles and values, this move further exposes their dependence on foreign powers and thus increases the gap between the people and the compromising regimes.

Iran: Rafsanjani—King Husayn Cannot Topple Saddam Unilaterally

JN1203151896 (Clandestine) Voice of Rebellious Iraq in Arabic 1315 GMT 12 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Shaykh Hashemi-Rafsanjani, president of the Islamic Republic of Iran, said that King Husayn cannot effect the change in Iraq unilaterally. Asked by our radio's correspondent about Iran's stand on the Jordanian king's plans to topple the Saddam regime, his eminence said that the Iraqi opposition is not in harmony with the Jordanian regime, and that they cannot work together. He indicated that the Iraqi issue is a complicated one.

On his opinion about the murder of Husayn Kamil and his brother and father on 23 February, Shaykh Rafsanjani told the Voice of Rebellious Iraq correspondent: Apparently, the killings took place in a ruthless and merciless manner. His eminence wondered: According to what yardsticks did this killings take place?

These remarks came in a news conference that was held in Tehran on Monday [11 March] and was attended by a large crowd of journalists. The news conference was carried live by the U.S. CNN news network. Our radio's correspondent Ahmad al-Rubay'i was among those who attended the conference. Responding to journalists' questions, Shaykh Rafsanjani stressed Iran's rejection of all forms of terrorism. He indicated that Iran was and still is a victim of the terrorism sponsored by the United States and Zionism.

Iran: Envoy Says Iran Opposes Double Standards on Terrorism

LD1303082496 Tehran IRNA in English
0737 GMT 13 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 13, IRNA — The fresh move of the European Union (EU) was a response to the letter sent by Iran in 1993 to 15 heads of state, said Iranian Ambassador to Germany Seyyed Hoseyn Musavian, referring to a decision made by the EU to send a three-man delegation to Tehran for talks with Iranian officials.

In an interview with the English daily 'IRAN NEWS' printed Wednesday, he stressed, "Terrorism and violence must not be tolerated by anyone, anywhere or in any form," noting that if the EU suggested that Iran embarked on a fight against terrorism, then this exactly conformed with the intent expressed by Tehran since 1993.

Recalling President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani's letter to heads of state of EU countries in 1993, where he proposed that European leaders cooperate with Iran in seriously and continuously combatting terrorism on the regional and international levels, he noted, "Now, the EU, in sending its delegation to Iran, is welcoming Rafsanjani's proposal of two years ago."

While acknowledging that the visit of the delegation to Tehran is in line with the frequent dialogs conducted by Iran and the EU, however, Musavian warned that Tehran will not accept double standards in the fight against terrorism, an attitude which he said the West has been following.

"Iran condemns terrorism whatever its form and whoever commits it," he underlined, adding that if this was also the concept of the West, then Iran would be more than happy to extend assistance to the EU to combat this global menace.

Iran: IRNA Refutes Terrorist Allegations by Turkish Daily

LD1103195196 Tehran IRNA in English
1910 GMT 11 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Ankara, Mar 11 (IRNA) — The Iranian embassy here on Monday categorically refuted the allegations of the Istanbul-based daily HURRIYET that Iranian diplomats to Turkey were engaged in terrorist activities.

The allegation appeared in the daily on Sunday.

Dismissing the report as "false and baseless" the Iranian embassy said Iranian diplomats have no hand in terrorist activities.

Earlier also, following the propaganda tirade of the U.S. administration and the Zionist regime, HURRIYET had carried similar articles, which according to news experts in Ankara indicate growing Zionist influence on the daily.

Iran: Majles Speaker Lauds Massive Turnout in Elections

LD1203153096 Tehran IRNA in English
1134 GMT 12 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 12, IRNA — Majles Speaker Hojjat ol-Eslam 'Ali Akbar Nateq-Nuri here Tuesday described the massive participation of people in the fifth Majles elections last Friday as a great victory for the Islamic revolution and a strong blow on the U.S. and global arrogance.

Speaking at the open session of the Majles, he stressed respecting people's vote and called for a revision in the election laws to eliminate the existing problems.

Terming the allegations levelled against the Islamic Republic as totally unfounded and baseless, he stressed that Iran has been a major victim of terrorism and has experienced its bitter taste more than any country in the world.

Emphasizing that the world has been awakened, he said that no one can force Iran to surrender through disinformation campaign.

Turning to the injustice done upon the Palestinian people, he said the Palestinians are trying to regain their rights and this does not mean terrorism. "It is their right to struggle to repel aggression from their homeland," said the Majles speaker.

It is even more regrettable to see some Arab countries of the region, join voice with the Zionist regime and make plans for cooperation with Tel Aviv. "This is the greatest treachery against Muslims and Islam," he said.

The Majles speaker cautioned that the measures taken by these countries pave the way for entry into the Persian Gulf region of the Zionists. This is considered a disgrace, he added.

Iran: Tehran Vote Counting To End 13 Mar

LD1203184996 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 12 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The counting of votes in the fifth Majles election for the Tehran constituency will conclude tomorrow at noon [0830 GMT]. The final results will be referred first to Tehran Province's supervision council, and then to the country's election headquarters, who will make them public after the necessary review.

Tehran Governor Mr. Payandeh announced the above news today in an interview with the Central News Unit, and said: Vote counting has now ended in 3,237 Tehran ballots. The results are now being classified and downloaded into computers. He said experts had predicted that it would take ten days for the votes to be counted and the results to be announced. He added: In these elections, less time has been spent on counting the votes and announcing the results than previous Majles elections.

He said: This time, there were 800 more polling stations than the last elections, and altogether 402 candidates took [illegible] this round. Considering these two factors, the [illegible] process should have taken up more time, but still [illegible] results will be announced in less than a week.

Iran. [illegible]-Nuri, Ms. Hashemi Still Lead in Tehran Constituency

LD1303074496 Tehran IRNA in English 0709 GMT 13 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 13, IRNA — Hojjat ol-Eslam 'Ali Akbar Nateq-Nuri and Ms. Faezeh Hashemi Bahramani still continue to be on the top of the list of contenders based on the votes counted until 9:00 am Wednesday.

According to the latest reports, Majlis Speaker Hojjat ol-Eslam Nateq-Nuri is the leading candidate in Tehran constituency with 558,950 votes out of 1,575,41[illegible] ballots counted so far.

Meanwhile, Ms. Hashemi maintains the second place with 547,639 votes.

According to the report, so far only Hojjat ol-Eslam Nateq-Nuri and Ms. Hashemi have secured the required number of votes to enter the 270-seat Majlis. Candidates who fail to secure the required number of votes will have to compete in the run-off elections, scheduled for April 20, 1996.

Iran: Rejected Candidates Send Protest Letter to President

LD1303095896 Tehran IRNA in English 0921 GMT 13 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 13, IRNA — A group of 30 rejected candidates, comprising of current and former Majles deputies on Tuesday wrote a letter to President Akbar Hashemi- Rafsanjani objecting to their exclusion, the morning daily AKHBAR reported Wednesday.

Read by 'Ali Mohammad Gharibani, a deputy from Ardebil, during the open session of the Majles yesterday, the letter called on the president to intervene in the affair.

Referring to their revolutionary commitment, the rejected candidates stated that in view of the invitation from high-level officials of the country, they filed their candidacies for the fifth Majles.

As to their being turned down by the executive boards supervising the elections and by the council of guardians, they noted that not only were they not given a chance for legal and legitimate defense, but their efforts to learn the reasons for their rejection also failed.

Referring to certain articles of the parliamentary election law pertaining to the right to submit objections to the provincial supervisory board, the signatories of the letter said that as the decision of the council of guardians concerning the eligibility of people is a judgment, this eligibility must be examined according to the acquitting principle, which is a theological, Islamic and legal principle.

Iran: Expert Calls Turnout in Majles Elections 'Reasonable'

LD1303100396 Tehran IRNA in English 0845 GMT 13 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 13, IRNA — A free-lance journalist, Siamak Zand, believes that the turnout in the just ended Majles elections was 'reasonable', reported the English-language daily TEHRAN TIMES on Wednesday.

"If elections are meant to be an expression of the people's will, that's what the election was," said Zand commenting on the last Friday nation-wide elections for the 270-seat Majles.

According to the veteran observer of the Iranian politics, the elections were fair and the political parties abided by the rules of conduct.

Zand described the elections as a positive step in political development of the country hoping that it would also mean a better life for the people.

Iran: Militant Clergy Statement on Elections

NC1203164896 Tehran JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI in Persian 29 Feb 96 pp 2, 12

[FBIS Translated Text] The Tehran Militant Clergy Association [TM[illegible]A] has issued a statement in which it lists the names of its candidates for the fifth Majles elections and calls on all the people to participate fully in the elections.

Excerpts of this statement read: With the help of God almighty, elections for the fifth Majles term are to be held in a few days. In view of the great significance of these elections and on the eve of this great Islamic and national movement, the TMCA deems it necessary to discuss a few points with the pious and revolutionary people of Tehran.

Our dear people are very well aware that defending the beliefs, safeguarding the revolution's achievements, preserving independence, and ensuring the nation and the nation's rights and especially the Constitution, are among the main objectives and duties of the Majles.

Ensuring these great objectives and duties depends on the full participation of all the people in the elections and on the election of pious, revolutionary, alert, brave, and politically aware persons.

Undoubtedly the holding of spectacular and extensive elections depends on the active participation of various individuals and groups in the campaigns, by preserving canonical and legal norms and principles. Fortunately in these elections, like in the past, various individuals and political groups and associations have actively participated. This is a source of happiness, both for the people and for the esteemed leader.

What should be emphasized is the need to preserve moral, canonical, and legal conditions and norms in the election campaign. All of us should be very careful not to distract, God forbid, from the course of our canonical, moral, and legal principles since the main issue is the cultural and moral elevation of the country and of the people.

Thank God, and thanks to the Islamic Revolution's achievements, the atmosphere in the country is completely free and healthy for constructive political activities. All the officials—both the supervisory and the executive—are striving for the elections to be held in a completely healthy atmosphere.

Unfortunately, some people and publications inside the country sometimes fan the flames of the enemies' propaganda and allege that there is a lack of complete freedom in the elections.

No one expects the enemy not to speak or to write against this revolution and this nation. But people who consider themselves to be revolutionaries are not expected to behave in this manner. Therefore, it is necessary for them to review their words and behavior and not to add fuel to the enemy's fire and to call on the people to participate fully in the elections and to create a healthy atmosphere.

Our pious and revolutionary people are approaching the elections for the fifth Majles term after having successfully completed four legislative terms, with the help of God.

These noble people have proven their political maturity in the way they helped elect past Majles and, God willing, an "ideal Majles" will be elected in the fifth term as well.

This can only be achieved if the people heed the criteria and qualities for an "ideal Majles."

From our point of view, an ideal Majles calls for the following qualities:

A. Pursuing the Imam's line:

A Majles should, above all else, walk in the luminous path charted by the great leader of the Islamic Revolution, His Eminence Imam Khomeyni, may his soul be sanctified. It should believe in the revolutionary values and aspirations of the Imam and work to fulfill these. It was the path of the Imam, may his soul be sanctified, that brought the Islamic Revolution to victory, liberated the nation and the country from monarchical despotism, and uprooted the evil tree of the 2,500 years of monarchy from this country.

The achievements of Imam Khomeyni's movement cannot be erased from the hearts of the Iranian nation. The main secret for the success scored by this system throughout the past 17 years has been that it has followed the Imam's line. And the major points in the Imam's line that the Majles should follow are:

—The Majles should be the manifestation of obedience to divine teachings and resistance against the domination of satan. It should observe these principles when carrying out its legislative and supervisory duties;

—The Majles should bravely and decisively resist bullying by world powers and especially by the criminal America and should be a manifestation of the nation's courage and decisiveness against arrogance. Struggling against oppression and against America are among the major characteristics of the revolution and of the line of Imam Khomeyni, may his soul be sanctified, and the continuation of these characteristics depends on the Majles' efforts;

—The Majles should put the task of ensuring social justice at the top of its list of programs and should consider the salvation of the oppressed as one of its major concerns;

—The Majles should ensure the existence of agreement with and support for the other branches, and especially for the government. The Majles should preserve its power and independence and decisively carry out its supervisory role and guidance;

—The Majles should support the process of reconstruction and development, as in the past, and—by approving major programs— display to the world an example of a developed nation and of a healthy economy;

—The Majles should, by preserving its popular reputation, be the contact point between the people and the system's functionaries;

If the above directives are followed, the Majles will be a one that is moving "within the Imam's line."

B. Obedience to the leadership:

The second quality of an "ideal Majles" is its sincere obedience to the leader and to the supreme jurisconsult.

On the basis of Article 57 of the Constitution, the three branches are under the supervision of the supreme jurisconsult and the guidance of the ummah. On the basis of Article 110 of the Constitution, it is the duty of the esteemed leader to determine the general policies of the Islamic Republic of Iran and to supervise their proper implementation. Therefore, the Majles should be the arm of the supreme jurisconsult in the country's management and should work to fulfill his views on and wishes for the country. Thus, the major slogan of "obedience to the leadership" is one of the TMCA's major and fundamental slogans. And our dear nation has also accepted this major national legacy—that is, the Constitution.

The Majles has an outstanding role to play at the current juncture, when the country is experiencing reconstruction and development. The Majles should extend decisive and unflinching support for reconstruction and, at the same time, preserve religious and revolutionary values and the basiji culture. The rule of capitalism and money is one of the dangers that always threatens developing societies. Therefore, this Majles should very alertly support the process of reconstruction and development, but also prevent the rule of capitalism and not allow the values of the revolution to lose their luster in the development process.

D. Social Justice and Development:

Social justice is one of the lofty aspirations of the Islamic Revolution and one of the significant values of His Eminence the Imam, may his soul be sanctified. The Islamic Revolution and the Islamic system can never be inattentive toward social justice. The tarnishing of justice means the tarnishing of the revolution.

The development of Islamic Iran is also an extremely important and vital issue, which the revolution and the country cannot ignore.

The TMCA considers economic development to be the prologue to and the instrument needed to achieve social justice and believes that justice is the objective and intention of development. Social justice cannot be made to lose its luster on the pretext of development, and vice versa. The TMCA believes in development coupled with social justice and considers social justice to be the spirit ruling development and reconstruction.

Popular Participation and Supervision:

This revolution was carried out with the participation, selflessness, and devotion of the people. Our understanding and revolutionary people are justly the main beneficiaries of the revolution, and all the efforts of the system's officials and functionaries should be aimed at serving these devoted people.

The people's participation before and after the revolution, during the imposed [Iran-Iraq] war, and in the country's reconstruction has always been coupled with blessings and the splendorous signs of the continuation of the divine movement of the revolution. Therefore, the people's participation should continue in all areas, as in the past but even stronger. Today the revolution and the Islamic Republic's system need the extensive and profound participation of the people more than ever before. Today our dear people are aware of their sensitive and effective role in the management of the system and the country more than ever before. Therefore, they are ready to support and assist the system and the officials in all possible ways. It is now the officials' turn to carry out their duties in creating favorable grounds for the full participation of the people.

According to Imam Khomeyni, may his soul be sanctified, the Majles is the essence of the nation's virtues, the essence of the people's extensive efforts, and it heads the country's affairs. Therefore, its deputies should be people who can preserve, as best as possible, the immense virtues of this nation and the pure blood that they have shed for the elevation of Islam. Thus, "freedom," "courage," "awareness," "being revolutionary," "being virtuous," "caring for religion," and finally "having a popular nature" and "tending to the people's problems" are among the major qualities of a competent deputy.

In his important remarks at Tehran's Friday Prayers and the 'Id al-Fitr sermon, the esteemed leader listed the precise criteria that are needed for the election of competent deputies. His Eminence stated that "someone who does not like Islam, does not accept Islamic laws, and insults the revolution in order to please foreigners, or someone who—out of intimidation—inclines toward the enemy instead of toward the nation, who lacks the necessary virtue and does not pursue moral issues but only wants a title and position and to use this position for his personal purposes is not fit to be a Majles deputy."

Bearing in mind these criteria and qualities and on the basis of the directives of His Eminence the Imam, may his soul be sanctified, and of the esteemed leader, the TMCA—after consulting with trustworthy and alert groups that walk in the line of the Imam and the leadership—has examined the names of dozens of national and religious dignitaries during its various meetings. It has discerned 30 of these people to be "competent" and informs the nation of their names as follows:

1. Hojjat ol-Eslam val Moslemin 'Ali Akbar Nateq-Nuri;
2. Hojjat ol-Eslam val Moslemin Mohammad 'Ali Movahhedi-Kermani;
3. Hojjat ol-Eslam val Moslemin Hasan Ruhani;
4. Hojjat ol-Eslam val Moslemin Mohsen Mojtahed-Shabestari;
5. Hojjat ol-Eslam val Moslemin Seyyed 'Ali Akbar Hoseyni;
6. Hojjat ol-Eslam val Moslemin Seyyed 'Ali Akbar Abu Torabi;
7. Hojjat ol-Eslam val Moslemin 'Ali Movahhedi-Savoji;
8. Hojjat ol-Eslam val Moslemin 'Abdolhoseyn Mo'ezzi;
9. Hojjat ol-Eslam val Moslemin Seyyed Reza Taqavi;
10. Hojjat ol-Eslam val Moslemin Qorban 'Ali Dorri-Najafabadi;
11. Hojjat ol-Eslam val Moslemin Seyyed Reza Akrami;
12. Hojjat ol-Eslam val Moslemin Seyyed Mahmud D'oayi;
13. Mrs. Maryam Behruzi;
14. Dr. Marziyeh Vahid-Dastjerdi;
15. Mrs. Monireh Nowbakht;
16. Mrs. Labafinezhad (Parvin Salimi)
17. Mrs. Nafiseh Fayyazbakhsh
18. Habibollah Asgar-Owladi;
19. Dr. 'Abbas Sheybani;
20. Dr. Javad Ardeshir Larijani;
21. Eng. Mohammad Reza Bahonar;
22. Eng. Seyyed Mohsen Yahyavi;
23. Eng. Seyyed Morteza Nabavi;
24. Dr. Musa Zargar;
25. Mr. Asadollah Badamchian;
26. Dr. 'Ali 'Abbaspur;
27. Eng. Seyyed 'Ali Seyyed-Khamushi;
28. Dr. Seyyed Shahaboddin Sadr;
29. Eng. Davud Danesh-Ja'fari;
30. Mr. Seyyed Mohammad Asghari.

Iran: Editorial on Positions of Political Factions

96LA0122A Tehran AKHBAR in Persian 19 Dec 95 p 3

[Article by AKHBAR's Parliamentary Correspondent Farshad Mohsenzadeh Ladari: "Status of Political Groups on Eve of Majles Elections"]

[FBIS Translated Text] With less than three months remaining before the elections for the Fifth Majles, election fever becomes hotter every day in the form of political activity, the open and semi-open activities of the candidates and current Majles deputies, and in many political and religious groups inside and outside the Parliament.

Yet in previous terms, with the exception of the First Islamic Consultative Majles, there were no major activities involving all the groups in the area of the Majles elections.

Of course the special importance of the Fifth Majles compared to previous terms and the concurrent press attention to the various election issues such as explaining the policies and ways of thinking of the existing groups in the Majles, discussion about political parties and the necessity to form political parties, the role of the public in the elections, and the differences of opinion between the ruling faction and the other political ways of thinking existing in the Majles during the past few months, have caused the coming Majles elections to have special importance in the minds and thoughts of the public.

Many political observers believe that the aggregate of factors such as the election of the president of the republic one year after the elections for the Fifth Majles, the passing of the period of revolutionary turmoil, the government's stability, the adjustment of certain points of view concerning various domestic policies and diplomatic principles (with the exception of those that pertain to national and religious interests), the end of the hard-line period, the implementation of the Second Five-Year Plan during the Fifth Majles, and also the likelihood of a revision of opinion on certain matters of foreign policy point to the importance and the distinction between the forthcoming Majles elections and those of the Second, Third, and Fourth terms.

Of course among the four Majles terms that followed the Islamic revolution, the first Majles term must be considered exceptional and different from the subsequent three because of efforts that were made to stabilize the position of the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the existence of the different and conflicting ideas and political parties.

After the true essence of the advocates of the liberals, the Freedom Movement, the National Front, the Tudeh Party, and the leftist forces in the First Majles and Bani Sadr's flight from the country in 1360 [21 March 1981 - 20 March 1982] became clear, along with several other matters, gradually the deputies following the imam's line took over the seats in the Second Majles.

Therefore, in terms of their way of thinking and their political ideas, the deputies who made their way into the Second Majles generally followed a single shared political line. However, late in the Second Majles, differences gradually began to appear in the thinking and factional affiliations of this group of deputies.

For this reason, the Third Majles is considered a turning point in the history of Iran's parliamentary system, especially since the Islamic revolution. During this term, due to the emergence of more serious and obvious differences of opinion in various areas, especially with regard to the political and economic issues among the deputies supporting the Militant Clerics Society [Majma'e Rowhaniyun-e Mobarez] (the majority) and those supporting the Militant Clergy Association [Jameh-ye Rowhaniyat-e Mobarez] (the minority), these differences of opinion evolved into a state of conflict.

In the Third Majles, in addition to the differences between the deputies of the people in the aforementioned areas, they even differed over the principles of foreign policy. In this term, when most of the chairs in parliament were held by the forces of the Militant Clerics Society faction, the supporters of the Militant Clergy Association (the minority), who were more moderate than the first faction in overall economic and political policies, concentrated their activities on obtaining power in the elections for the Fourth Majles.

A significant number of the nation's programs, including the government's First Five-Year Plan, were compiled during the Third Majles, the time when the Militant Clerics Society held power in the Majles, but in the Fourth Majles a group of deputies from the majority faction (the Militant Clergy Association), who came into the parliament with slogans about following the imam's line, obeying the leader and supporting Hashemi, criticized the government's policies, especially on economic affairs.

Because of the opposition from a group of deputies (the traditional right or the supporters of the bazaar faction) and the support of some like-minded deputies, even the compilation and Majles approval of the Second Five-Year Plan and its change of direction were delayed by a year. Of course some deputies believe this halt in progress was caused by investigation of the 1374 [21 March 1995 - 20 March 1996] Budget Bill and the expert studies for the Five-Year Plan.

Unlike this group (the traditional right), another group of supporters of the Militant Clergy Association [Jameh-ye Rowhaniyat-e Mobarez], known as the modern right, not only did not want a change in the direction of the Second Five-Year Plan, but as a group close to the government of the time and in support of its policies, they even wanted to put economic development ahead of social justice.

It must be acknowledged that the leftist faction (the Militant Clerics Society [Majma'e Rowhaniyun-e Mobarez]), in adopting floating policies on some of the aforementioned matters, held the same views as the traditional right and also with the modern right in some cases.

However, the independents held shared positions with the modern right on all issues.

Therefore, as the result of these differences of views in the majority factions (the Militant Clerics Society) there was a split between the traditional right (the bazaar faction) and the modern right.

The modern right, supporters of the polices of economic adjustment — or in their own words, the realists — had views that were aligned with the government and close to it.

This group believes that the problems and affairs of nation-keeping must be submitted to the hands of specialist and committed individuals.

Another group, known as the "independents" or moderates, is already in the Islamic Consultative Majles and supports neither the hard-line right (the Militant Clerics Society) nor the majority faction (the Militant Clergy

Association) in its decisions, and has independent positions.

This group believes that in the time when they held power, the rightist and leftist factions had no significant successes in any of the various areas, especially in solving economic problems and in foreign policy principles.

One group of political observers believes that the independents have a much greater chance than the others of taking the majority of the seats in the Fifth Majles.

However, others believe that because of the disputes in the Fourth Majles between the Militant Clergy Association (the majority) and the ousting of the hard-line faction (the Militant Clerics Society) from the political scene since the elections for the Fourth Majles, the independents and the modern right, which to a great extent have shared views on the various issues, will obtain the power to act in the future.

According to this group of political observers, the main reasons the traditional right (bazaar advocates) will have a weak position in the Fifth Majles are the impracticality of the promises to solve economic problems the majority faction gave at the beginning of the Fourth Majles to get votes, and international pressures such as the U.S. economic embargo against Iran.

Likewise, political observers say that the two factions, the Militant Clerics Society and the Militant Clergy Association, have lost a significant amount of their political standing in public opinion because of their failure to succeed completely in solving many problems, especially economic problems. On the other hand, based on the passage of time and the overall perspective on the period since the revolution, public opinion has gradually moved in the direction of the free and independent groups.

This group of political observers believes that for this reason it is likely that about 40 of the deputies who supported the leftist faction (the Militant Clerics Society) in the Fourth Majles will either form a coalition with the independents, or at least lean in their direction.

At the same time, after the elections for the Fourth Majles the Militant Clerics Society will not seek to regain power or function as an alternative in the elections for the Fifth Majles. In the last few months many prominent figures in the Militant Clerics Society faction have declared that this society will not present any candidates for the next Majles term.

Iran: JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI Urges Expulsion of CNN Correspondent

LD0803163596 Tripoli JANA in English
1619 GMT 8 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, al Rabia [Mar] 8, JAMAHIRIYAH NEWS AGENCY — The Iranian newspaper (JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI) has called for the expulsion of the correspondent of the American satellite network C.N.N. from Iran, who it described as a spy.

The newspaper said that the American correspondent is sending reports on Iran, which abound with lies, fabrications, in compatibility with the hostile American stances against Iran.

Iran: Complaints to Newspaper Reflect Social, Economic Problems

WA1203020996 FOREIGN BROADCAST INFORMATION SERVICE MEDIA NOTE

[FBIS Report]

1996 Series Number 2

The daily Tehran SALAM in Persian carries a regular column, "Hello, SALAM" based on telephoned-in complaints and remarks of ordinary Iranian citizens. The following series of dialogues between callers and the paper are excerpted from January editions. These particular complaints deal with relations with Syria; the elections; the high cost of living; foreign news; Ayatollah Yazdi's address; Minister Velayati's statement about Dr. Sorush; and the malaria epidemic.

On Relations With Syria:

[Caller] It was reported in the news that Mr. Hafiz al-Asad has joined the sheikhs of Dubbay, Qatar and Oman. It is obvious that Mr. Hafez al-Asad is a politician who knows what he is doing. He thinks of his own country's welfare. However, ask these gentlemen in our Foreign Affairs Ministry how much they have given to Syria. Syria has not only come to an agreement with Israel but has made this agreement at the cost of Iran's territorial integrity and has assumed the same position as Saudi Arabia in regard to the Persian Gulf islands. [8 Jan 96]

[Caller] I noticed that Syria, too, claims the sovereignty of the UAE over the Iranian islands. It is quite sad that a country that has received thousands of tonnes of free oil and cheap gas, which owes us money and to whose well-being our tourists contribute, repays us by handing over islands that have been in Iranian hands for centuries. Our Ministry of Foreign Affairs' reaction has been very conciliatory [9 Jan 96]

[Caller] I want to prove mathematically to Mr. Gharazi's [as published] that 1 million times 12 equals zero, if you estimate that Iran provided Syria yearly with 1 million tons of crude for 12 years. What was in it for us? Nothing! Zip! We were repaid by their agreement with the usurping Zionist regime and denial of our territorial integrity. [9 Jan 96]

[Caller] Please tell these gentlemen to act more responsibly in their foreign dealings, namely regarding their assistance to Syria. [9 Jan 96]

On Elections:

[Caller] I have a question for the right wing. During free elections, the Islamic Refah Party won in Turkey, a country with 70 years of secular rule, and a woman as its prime minister. In our country, which is headed by an Islamic government, we see that the Rowhaniyun-e Mobarez, due to pressure, have preferred to hand over the elections to the other wing. In our country, the right wing is holding on to the levers of power so tightly that even the religious people cannot breathe easily. But how long can they keep this up? [2 Jan 96]

[Caller] I am among those who have decided not to participate in the elections because I have seen how people like Messrs. Behzad Nabavi [former minister of heavy industries], Mohtashemi ['Ali Akbar Mohtashemi-pur, former ambassador to Syria, interior minister and Majles member from Tehran who lost significant influence since Rafsanjani became President in 1989] and Karrubi [Mehdi Mahdavi Karrubi, former Majles Speaker whose influence has waned in recent years], who were admired by the imam and the people, were pushed aside during the Fourth Majles by the right wing. If the past actions of these individuals were improper, the entire system should come under questioning. If their actions were proper, as approved by the imam, then the right wing has behaved badly. Now, tell me for whom should I vote?

[SALAM] We cannot conceal our sadness about what happened during the Fourth Majles. The damage was not that certain people were pushed aside but the doubt that was created in the minds of people about the past. It should be mentioned, however, that people should not be identified with the system. Just because someone has been valued by the iman, it does not mean that he should never be questioned. The imam himself did not refrain from reproaching those he favored. It should be added that much of what happened during the Fourth Majles was done by individuals who were favored by the imam. [6 Jan 96]

[Caller] Tell the officials not to be so certain that people will exercise their voting rights, especially the educated class such as myself and numerous others. After many years of study, we are still unemployed and we'll demonstrate our opposition to the government's policies by not participating. [10 Jan 96]

[Caller] I wanted you to urge people not to participate in the elections. It may shake up these gentlemen a bit.

[SALAM] The less people who participate in the political and social arenas of the country, the more the influence of opportunists will increase. Eventually, people will be pushed away and rule of force will prevail. Instead of relying on the people, the nation will have to rely on foreigners. We have to give our support to the competent and the pious and stop believing that by nonparticipation we can change anyone's attitude. [11 Jan 96]

[Caller] I want to respond to the reader who said that he will not participate in the elections. On the contrary, I will participate. However, I will vote for the candidate of my choice even if he has not passed through the "sieve of approval" so that the officials will know which candidates are the people's choice. [13 Jan 96]

On the High Cost of Living:

[Caller] I ask you, as someone who encourages people to participate actively in the elections, is there any hope? You know there is no hope for oppressed people like us. Do you and our esteemed officials know that my children have not eaten fruit in the last six months? When you go home, do you have to face your hungry children? Do your children, like mine, sup on mere bread and sweetened tea? Have you ever gone out with your wife and children to notice that in an instant your child has picked up a banana peel from the ground and is eating it? Mr. Editor, do you know what hunger is? I swear you have only read about it in novels. [1 Jan 96]

[Caller] A month ago, I went to the Oil Ministry's cooperative store. Lamb fillet was selling for 2,700 tumans per kilo, beef for 2,300 tumans, and chicken kabab for 1,700. I thought an employee with an advanced education and 26 years of service, such as myself, has neither the teeth to eat these nor the money to pay for such extravagance. This is for the managers and supervisors who enjoy thousands of benefits. But the question is, what happens to the rent collected from these booths and who pockets the income from a cooperative that belongs to the employees of oil industries? [3 Jan 96]

[Caller] I wanted to say that these potatoes are not imported from the United States; they are domestically grown. Why are they so expensive, then? [9 Jan 96]

[Caller] Considering how capable the country's officials are, if they would only solve the potato problem, we would manage the rest. [10 Jan 96]

[Caller] One of the SALAM readers was objecting to the cooking section in the paper. Tell him it is not necessary to cook these dishes right away. The officials, God willing, as promised, will rectify matters and you'll be able to cook these dishes someday [10 Jan 96]

[Caller] Do you know why Russians are going back to their previous regime? The endless problems of the people: inflation, high cost of living, unemployment. The officials better be careful and try to keep people satisfied. [1 Jan 96]

On Foreign News

[Caller] We heard the BBC announce the indictment of Sheykh 'Ali Tehrani [brother-in-law of leader Khamene'i]. Don't tell us anymore not to listen to foreign news. [1 Jan 96]

On Yazdi's Address:

[Caller] Ayatollah Yazdi, the head of the judiciary, very frankly declared the lack of importance of the people's vote. I want to thank him. He expressed his opinion with honesty. There remains, however, an enigma for me. What good is the constitution? What good is the Majles? What good is the Assembly of Experts? What good is the Expediency Discernment Council and all other organs? Why do they even declare themselves candidates and why do they ask people to participate in the elections? What is the meaning of this deviousness? [11 Jan 96]

[Caller] Tell Mr. Yazdi [Ayatollah Mohammad Yazdi, head of the Judiciary Branch] that it was the people's vote that elevated him from seminary teaching to his current position.

[SALAM] Mr. Yazdi and those who think as he does, do not deny the importance of popular vote but they believe that the people's vote is not the source of legitimacy; rather, the sovereign is designated by God and people are dutybound to support him. If people do not vote for him and do not support him, the sovereign might not have the power to run the country, but that does not mean that he does not have the right to govern. [4 Jan 96]

On Velayati About Sorush:

[Caller] I am calling from Khuzestan regarding what Mr. Velayati said about Dr. Sorush [outspoken philosopher and professor at Tehran University], namely, that Sorush should keep his ideas to himself. Well, why doesn't Mr. Velayati, and other officials, practice what they preach? And, in any case, what does the government mean by freedom of speech? [6 Jan 96]

On Spread of Malaria

I am a physician and I am calling from Nickshahr from the province of Sistan va Balutchestan. I want to talk about the ravages of malaria in this province. Because of the erroneous policies adopted in combating malaria, the disease is out of control here. According to the figures released by the health center, the number of new cases of malaria in the first six months of this year is larger than the total number of cases last year. There is hardly a family that is not afflicted. This is true of all the cities in Sistan va Baluchestan. [8 Jan 96]

Iran: Liberation Movement Head Says Imam's Letter 'Fabricated'

NC0803125496 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 2 Mar 96 pp 1, 14

[TEHRAN TIMES Service report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] TEHRAN — Secretary General of the Liberation Movement of Iran (LMI), Ebrahim Yazdi, on the subject of a letter written by the late Imam Khomeyni to the then minister of interior and published by an Iranian magazine, Sobh, in its February 13 issue, called the letter a "bogus" one.

Raising the genuineness of the letter into question, Yazdi, in an exclusive interview with the Tehran Times, questioned the Guardian Council's using of the letter as a main evidence to reject his eligibility to run in the Fifth Majles elections.

The similarity between the handwriting in the letter and that of the late Khomeyni's is not an evidence of its genuineness, Yazdi said.

Ebrahim Yazdi is a former foreign minister of Mehdi Bazargan's interim government which came to power immediately after the victory of the Islamic Revolution in 1979.

He stressed that close friends of the late Imam Khomeyni are aware of the fact that the late Imam used to ask others to write most of his letters but that he personally signed them after reading them.

Asked on whether he had seen other letters written in a handwriting similar to that of the late Imam's, Yazdi recalled the time when he was to assume responsibility for Keyhan Institute and Imam Khomeyni asked his late son, Hojjat-ol-Eslam Seyyed Ahmat Khomeyni, to prepare the letter after which the late Imam signed it and gave it to him (Yazdi), appointing him to head the institute.

Yazdi, who assumed the position of LMI secretary general after Bazargan passed away on January 20, 1995, said the late Hojjat-ol-Eslam Ahmad Khomeyni, Hojjat-ol-Eslam Ashtiyani and a third person, whose name he had forgotten, were responsible for writing the late Imam's letters.

"The task of ascertaining the genuine handwriting of the late Imam Khomeyni should not be difficult using both expert and computer assistance," he pointed out.

The Imam's letter which was published by the weekly, Sobh, in its February 13 edition was purportedly written by the Imam to the then interior minister, Hojjat-ol-Eslam 'Ali Akbar Mohtashami.

In the letter, the late Imam rejected any LMI member from running for any state, legislative or judiciary post.

"Due to their substantive record, repeated meetings of members either in their homes or in the U.S. Embassy here, and due to questionable activities which I have seen in this and other cases, the so-called Liberation Movement is not fit to take part in any kind of state, legislative and judiciary function", the letter printed in the weekly read.

The weekly then suggested that the late Imam Khomeyni was of the conclusion that the Liberation Movement and its members misled people who were ignorant about its aims and should decidedly be excluded.

In an open letter recently sent to the Sobh weekly, the LMI has provided two reasons indicating that the said letter was fabricated:

Firstly, why the letter was published two years after it was issued and after the departure of Imam Khomeyni? Secondly, why the former interior minister, permitted the movement to have its political activities one year after the letter was issued and one year before it was published in Pasdar Eslam.

"Even if it is proven that the letter was written by the late Imam Khomeyni", Yazdi said, "it is still considered as containing (mere) accusations against the LMI."

Yazdi, who was a U.S. resident for 17 years before the culmination of the Islamic Revolution and is a frequent visitor there using his Green Card, is now connected with a pharmaceutical industry in Tehran.

According to Article 18 of the Islamic Disciplinary Code approved on October 18, 1995 by the Majles, Yazdi's remarks which were contained in certain LMI-distributed pamphlets constitute an insult to the late Leader of the Islamic Revolution and are highly discernable as such.

Iran: Commentary Views Benefits of Southern Free Trade Zones

LD1103130596 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1051 GMT 11 Mar 96

[Unattributed commentary on development in southern Iran thanks to free trade zones]

[FBIS Translated Text] It was announced yesterday that in as part of the policy to fight deprivation throughout the country the total investment pledged by 541 domestic and foreign investors in the free trade zone of Qeshm had reached $4 billion by the end of Bahman [month ending 19 February].

These investments, which are made without any burden on the government's budget, include a wide spectrum of infrastructural projects such as electrification, road building, communications networks, technical and occupational training and higher education centers, as well as export-related industries and services such as hotels and hospitals. Large parts of these have been completed and others are nearing completion and will be made operational soon.

Thus, the largest island in the Persian Gulf has been transformed into one of the country's active and bustling centers after years of neglect and underdevelopment. Its present image is quite different from what it was in the past.

The idea of creating free trade and industry zones, which has been discussed in our country for years, was given a legal framework with the approval of the Majles as a part of its examination of the first [five-year] development plan. According to this law, the islands of Kish and Qeshm and the port of Chabahar were recognized as three free trade zones which can use their relative advantages to attract investment from inside and outside the country in order to promote development and progress.

At first some people feared that these regions would turn into channels for the entry of imported goods into the country, but after a while these fears were allayed when comprehensive and legal criteria for their administration and for the economic activity in these regions were drawn up and approved.

The laws and regulations that were approved for these regions, after extensive study and debate, eased the entry and exit of investment and goods into these regions, and created incentives for exploiting their relative advantages. In addition, they also put up a barrier to stop a range of foreign luxury items flooding into the rest of the country from the free trade zones, preventing our country's limited foreign exchange resources from being wasted on unnecessary things.

Combating deprivation in the south of the country, however, is not confined to the free trade and industry zones. The project to expand the airport on the island of Abu Musa was also commissioned yesterday. Two weeks ago, the president inaugurated the Khash cement project. The country's eighth oil refinery and the al-Mahdi aluminum complex in Bandar-e 'Abbas will be commissioned next year. The Iranshahr electrical power station is undergoing its final phases before completion. The expansion of shrimp fishing and breeding centers have improved production and employment on our southern coasts and the Bafq-Bandar-e 'Abbas railway has been transformed into a highway linking Central Asian countries with open seas.

The above-mentioned projects, as well as the hundreds of other projects that have been implemented in the country's southern regions in recent years, all herald a blossoming of the economy in an important part of our country. The residents of this area knew nothing but poverty and deprivation before the victory of the Islamic revolution, but they are now filled with hope and incentives for work and production and can look forward to a bright future.

Nepal

Nepal: Opposition Requests No-Confidence Debate

BK1203092096 Kathmandu THE KATHMANDU POST in English 12 Mar 96

[Report by "a POST reporter" — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kathmandu, March 11 — In a tit for tat move reminiscent of last year's political drama, the CPN (UML) [Communist Party of Nepal-United Marxist Leninist], on Monday, petitioned His Majesty King Birendra to call a special parliamentary session to debate a vote of no-confidence against Prime Minister [PM] Sher Bahadur Deuba's coalition government.

UML chairman and former prime minister Manmohan Adhikari led a march of his fellow party lawmakers to the gates of the Narayanhity Royal Palace where the petition was registered at 3:10 PM.

A UML statement released later during the day said the petition, signed by 86 UML legislators, calls King Birendra to convene a special session of parliament as provided for by Article 53(3) of the constitution "to debate a no-confidence motion against the Deuba government".

The statement accuses the government, among other things, of "creating political instability, jeopardizing peace and tranquillity, violating human rights...and destructing national economy by implementing wrong economic policies".

All UML legislators except three who are out of Kathmandu have signed the petition, according to party sources.

Though King Birendra has yet to announce the special session, he is bound by the constitution to convene such a parliamentary session if at least one fourth members of the 205-seat House of Representatives submit a written petition.

Only last week, King Birendra announced that the regular tenth session of parliament would convene on April 5.

Political analysts here see Monday's developments as a tit-for- tat response by the UML for the drama which unfolded in June last year when the NC [Nepali Congress] called King Birendra to convene a special session to move a vote of no-confidence against the then Prime Minister Mana Mohan Adhikari's minority government.

Then, as now, a regular session of parliament had already been called to convene. Adhikari's subsequent dissolution of parliament to evade the no-confidence motion led to the historic battle at the Supreme Court which reversed the dissolution on August 28 paving the way for the present government to assume power.

UML sources say though the final decision to submit a petition was taken at a joint meeting of the party's parliamentary board and standing committee on Monday afternoon, the grounds were already being prepared after the Janakpur national council meeting of the party last month.

UML spokesman Radha Krishna Mainali told The KATHMANDU POST that his party was now adopting a wait and see policy about the possible equations likely to emerge after today's developments. He also did not rule out talks with the NC, and said that general-secretary Madhav Kumar Nepal had met PM Deuba on Sunday.

"We will watch all the parties and also talk to the RPP [Rashtriya Prajatantra Party] and Nepal Sadbhavana Party. This coalition government is not united because of the arrogance of the Nepali Congress. RPP feels it has been relegated to the sidelines by the NC", he said.

"It is the opposition's duty to move a no-confidence vote. Even if we fail in this attempt, our aim of waging a street struggle against this government will still continue", Mainali said.

UML, which had planned to convene a large gathering of its activists in the capital on March 14 to decide on the agitation, postponed the event till further notice on Monday to concentrate on the special session.

Meanwhile, all UML lawmakers except chairman Adhikari and MP Sahana Pradhan have been quarantined at party headquarters at Balkhu amid tight security. Party officials said, the lawmakers will likely stay so until the special session is convened and the vote of no-confidence moved.

Nepal: Communist Opposition Seeks Special Parliament Session

LD1103160496 Kathmandu Radio Nepal in English 1415 GMT 11 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A delegation of CPN-UML [Communist Party of Nepal-Unified Marxist-Leninist] leaders and MPs, led by party president and leader of the (?main opposition) party in the House of Representatives, Manmohan Akhikari, went to the royal palace this afternoon and petitioned his majesty the king to fix the date for a special session of the House of Representatives.

This is stated in a [word indistinct] statement issued by the CPN-UML central office in Kathmandu today. Since the present government, formed under the leadership of Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba, has (?left) the country directionless, motionless and leaderless [words indistinct] continues to make a mockery of the constitution and the democratic norms and values, the House of Representatives has lost its confidence in the present government, the press statement says, adding the special session of the House of [words indistinct] has been demanded to hold discussions on a no confidence motion against the government.

Nepal: Finance Minister Reports 'Notable Improvement'

BK1103015096 Kathmandu THE KATHMANDU POST in English 9 Mar 96

[Received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] KATHMANDU, March 8 (RSS) - Finance Minister Dr Ram Sharan Mahat has said there are clear indications of notable improvement in the overall national economy over the past five months.

Talking to RSS, Nepal Television and Radio Nepal here today, the finance minister said a review of present economic conditions shows that the situation is satisfactory, indications are that the gross domestic product is going to register a rise of 6 percent and the industrial production a rise of 8/9 percent, and the service sector has also expanded substantially since last year.

Since the advent of the coalition government there has been big gains in the mobilization of foreign and internal resources, he said adding that in the five months period agreements have been signed for some Rs [rupees] 8,500 million worth of foreign aid, pledges have been received for Rs 14,000 to 15,000 million more and internal revenue mobilization has also increased 20 percent.

As Nepal's revenues depend mostly on imports it is a matter of concern that a decline in imports also results in a decline in revenue, Dr Mahat said adding that whereas imports had increased 36 percent in the first six months of the past fiscal year imports have now increased only 17/18 percent and revenue realised has been lower than estimated. But such a decline in imports has helped the balance of payments and as against an increase of up to 77 percent in the trade deficit in the past this deficit has now greatly declined, he said.

An encouraging atmosphere has now been created for foreign investors. New licenses have been issued for investments of about Rs 1,500 million, and while exports had declined by an alarming 12/13 percent last year the declining trend has now been arrested, he said.

Price rises has now declined to 7 percent from 10 percent in the past and compared to last year development expenditure has increased 33 percent, he said.

Remarking on concrete measures taken to mobilize revenue, he said as per the target of bringing 50,000 new tax payers within the purview of taxation as per the policy of placing emphasis on direct tax payers, he said more than 100,000 thousands houses have been surveyed and 18,000 tax payers identified.

Paying one's taxes is not only the duty of citizens but should also be a matter of pride, the finance minister said and pointed out that a policy has been adopted to impose taxes lightly so that the tax payer will not fell any tax burden, there is no need to panic when tax survey teams come house to house, wealth of up to Rs 1,000,000 is not taxable and those with small incomes are also tax exempt.

As revenue leakage in the border areas is a matter of concern, nine teams have been formed for intensive patrolling of the border areas in all five development regions through mobilization of the police and the customs administration and these teams are to start work in one and half weeks, he said.

In order to stem revenue leakage green and red channels have been opened at Tribhuvan International Airport and the customs regime tightened up. Over the past four months 40 kilo of gold and foreign exchange worth Rs 20 million have been seized, he pointed out.

In response to a query about revenue collected from alcoholic drinks, the finance minister said Rs 30 is received by the government as soon as a bottle of beer manufactured in Nepal is opened, but the government does not get even a single paisa as revenue from foreign alcoholic drinks widely served at hotels and big parties.

Foreign liquor and cigarettes brought in duty free for foreigners are widely misused. People are putting pressure on the government to declare alcohol-free zones on the one hand and foodgrain is misused in producing alcohol in every other household on the other, he added.

Pointing out that alcohol is sold here even by retail rice shops, he said there is no other country in the world where alcohol is sold openly and disclosed that bearing all these things in mind the government is going to announce a new policy on alcoholic drinks soon.

In the course of preparing necessary infrastructure to implement value added tax (vat), a bill has been passed and work on the directory and on training manpower has been initiated. It takes about one year to complete all these preparations, he said.

The minister also informed the press that vat will bring 10-12 thousand taxpayers into the tax net and small businessmen will not be affected.

Asked whether prices will rise after the implementation of vat, Minister Mahat made it clear that just because of vat prices will not rise. Many goods will be taxed and this will lower the prices. But the price of some items may rise. But taken all together, vat will not be the cause of price hikes, he added.

Dwelling on the achievements of Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba's recent visit to India, the finance minister observed that with the visit, a new dimension has opened up in the sphere of economic ties on the basis of give and take including the areas of trade and tourism.

The removal of hurdles standing in the way of exports to India except those mentioned in a negative list has heightened prospects for Nepalese goods in the Indian market, industries will be opened in Nepal with an eye on the Indian market and the agreement on hydro-electricity has opened the door for investment from private, government and international sources in electricity generation, he added.

At a time when we are unable to exploit even a small part of the big tourism market in India, tourist arrivals from India and third countries will increase remarkably after Nepalese private airlines are allowed to operate into India as a result of this the trade deficit with India will decline, he hoped.

Asked what perspective should be adopted to enhance economic ties with China in view of the imminent visit of Prime Minister Deuba to China, Minister Mahat said China has contributed a good share to infrastructure development in Nepal.

He expressed the view that during the prime minister's visit, it would be appropriate to hold talks on proceeding further with the BP Koirala Cancer Hospital, the Pokhara-Baglung Highway, etc.

During the visit efforts should be made also at reducing the trade deficit with Tibet and promoting Chinese investment in Nepal, he added.

In reply to a question regarding spiralling price hike, Minister Mahat said to say that a programme aimed at curbing the price hike will be brought in would be nothing more than a political rumour mongering as prices cannot be controlled just by introducing any such programme.

Controlling the price hike requires controlling the money supply, the money supply growth has been held at a mere five or six percent and this is not much, said the minister adding, the price hike is now just seven percent and this is no mean achievement.

Noting that a policy has been adopted to maintain economic discipline, control unnecessary expenses and discourage development expenditure without projects made out of political motives, Minister Mahat disclosed that the commission formed as per a cabinet decision is seriously probing the LC (letter of credit) scam.

No new appointments have been made in financial corporations in view of irregularities there, he added.

Nepal: Bhutan People's Party Condemns King's Statement on Refugees

BK1203095096 Kathmandu THE KATHMANDU POST in English 11 Mar 96

[Report by "a POST reporter" — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kathmandu, March 10 — The Bhutan People's Party (BPP) has condemned a statement by the king of Bhutan Jigme Singye Wangchuck, which claimed 99 percent of the refugees currently camped in eastern Nepal are not Bhutanese nationals. The King Jigme of Bhutan made the statement in an interview with an Indian newspaper during his recent New Delhi visit. It reveals that the king has lately revoked his adamant stand of crushing the voices of dissent after having successfully maneuvered New Delhi, a BPP press release received here today said.

The BPP regrets to understand that India which holds the key to foreign policy and political stability of Bhutan is well informed of the Bhutanese regime's mania, however, continues to state that the Bhutanese people's democratic movement and the refuges crisis in Nepal is a bilateral issue. The BPP said that New Delhi cannot simply absolve itself of its responsibility and boost the morality of the regime by rendering all possible assistance.

King Jigme must realise that the Bhutanese people are much concerned of the future of Bhutan and demand that he cannot drive roughshod over the sentiments of the people.

In the name of national development he cannot mortgage the country to perpetuate his absolute, obsolete, and undemocratic regime, the press release further said.

More than 100,000 Bhutanese refugees are currently living in the refugee camps in eastern Nepal after fleeing government repression in Bhutan.

Talks between Nepal and Bhutan to solve the refugee problem have ended in stalemate with Bhutan insisting it will take back only those whom it considers genuine citizens.

A recent attempts by a group several hundred refugees to go to Bhutan via India to press their case met with failure when Indian border officials arrested them at the Mechi bridge.

Nepal: Editorial Views Talks on Bhutanese Refugee Issue

BK1103024996 Kathmandu THE KATHMANDU POST in English 10 Mar 96

[Editorial: "Break Off Talks"; received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] There is nothing new in the Bhutanese King Jigme Singye Wangchuk's claim, in an Indian newspaper that 99 percent of the refugees currently camped in eastern Nepal are not the Bhutanese nationals. With the scheduled Nepal-Bhutan talks just a couple of weeks away, this comment by the Bhutanese King will only complicate the already knotty refugee issue. It is unpalatable that the refugees are termed by the King as "ethnic Nepalese who claim to be Bhutanese". This has been the Bhutanese view all along and this perhaps explains why thousands were forcibly uprooted from their homes in southern Bhutan. The claims of the Bhutanese monarch is effectively countered by the refugees themselves. The Bhutanese refugees in Nepal have documents to prove that Bhutan is where they belong. The fact, which is already old, has been refused to be acknowledged by the Bhutanese side. This is the prime reason why the issue has lingered on. Except for the talks—there has been six already—there has been no notable progress to count on. Both the sides have reiterated that the issue must be resolved. If it must then there has to be a way. The deepening of the issue is in no way going to be diluted if Bhutan chooses to remain stiff and refuses to repatriate the people it forced out.

The Bhutanese King's praise for India on its stand in preventing a "deterioration of relations" between Nepal and Bhutan over the issue of the Lhothshampas, the southern Bhutanese, is highly misplaced. The issue is not as simple as the King has made it out to be. In his recent visit to India, Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba had tried to bring up the Bhutanese refugee issue only to be met by a stony silence on the part of India which insisted that the matter is a bilateral issue. The Foreign Minister, Dr Prakash Chandra Lohani, has, therefore, done right by publicly stating in an interview with this newspaper that the issue is a tri-lateral one. Half of the Bhutanese population are Nepali-speaking people, majority of them lived along the India border. The troubled Bhutanese entered into Nepal (taking the Indian transit route, of course) due to persecution and rampant violations of human rights in their home country in the early 1990s. Nepal, with a population that is several times more than in Bhutan, cannot afford to let the refugee issue rest. Currently there are over 80 thousand Bhutanese refugees in the camps in eastern Nepal. The total number of refugees exceed 100 thousand.

It is confounding why hundreds of them who had tried to go to Thimpu recently to appeal their King were stopped. Although India has chosen to remain neutral in the issue, yet it was India which stopped the peace marchers from going towards Bhutan. Nepal needs to do more to convince India, which under a 1949 treaty looks after Bhutan's foreign and defence matters, that it is in its interest as well as that of the region to amicably settle the refugee issue.

Now with the Nepal-Bhutan talks at the foreign ministers level scheduled to take place soon, one would have hoped that a conducive atmoshpere would be created for the success of the talks. But with Bhutan not budging an inch and taking the same old position the outcome of the proposed talks is already clear. The talks are doomed to failure as earlier ones have been. It will be merely wasting people's money to indulge in such talks when the same resources could be used for much better things. Given the present state of the Bhutanese government's mind as reflected in their absolute ruler's statements to the Indian press, the government would do well to break off talks and seek solutions through other means including internationalization of the issue.

Pakistan

Pakistan: Minister Defends 'Ambiguity' on Nuclear Issue for Security

BK1203145596 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1400 GMT 12 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The foreign minister, Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali, categorically assured the National Assembly today that Pakistan shall not ignore its security compulsions and take appropriate steps to match aggressive Indian designs. He was winding up discussion on identical adjournment motions by Mr. Gauhar Ayub Khan and other members [in the National Assembly] regarding Indian missile attack on Forward Kahuta in the last week of January in which over 20 people were killed.

The foreign minister dwelt at length on the massive Indian arms acquisition and development and deployment of Agni, Prithvi, and other missile systems, and said that Pakistan with its meager resources cannot match India aircraft to aircraft, tank to tank, and missile to missile. We know that India has a certain nuclear technology and was preparing to go for a thermal nuclear test. Pakistan had to develop its peaceful nuclear technology. We maintained an ambiguity in our program and this ambiguity has helped South Asia be free of war during the last 25 years. He said we do not want nuclear tests, but have to take measures for Pakistan's security. He pointed out the ambiguity about nuclear program is the only security that Pakistan has got. He warned the leadership in New Delhi that if they think that by going for the thermal nuclear test, India can prove its manhood to the world, Pakistan has its own manhood and shall meet their challenge.

He also drew the attention of the house toward Indian attempt to subvert the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty [CTBT] and said it has put conditionalities to total nuclear disarmament. He said Pakistan is for CTBT as we are a nonproliferationist state, but it cannot be unmindful of dangers to its security. He said Pakistan will not be able to sign the CTBT unilaterally, unless India signs it.

The foreign minister said the government and the opposition benches should evolve national consensus on foreign policy and lower their internal political temperature to face the aggressive designs of New Delhi.

About the tragic incident of Forward Kahuta, he said it was a deplorable attempt by India to intimidate Kashmiri people. He said Pakistan has lodged official complaint with the United Nations and governments around the world have been informed of the aggressive Indian action.

The foreign minister said that the Al-Faran group, which has kidnapped Western tourists, was a RAW [India's Research and Analysis Wing] agent meant to discredit Kashmir liberation struggle. He said that elections cannot resolve the Kashmir problem. If Indians think so, they are sadly mistaken. He said the whole situation in Kashmir has arisen because of Indian rigged elections and non-implementation of UN resolutions.

Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali said that the building of fences by India in Jammu is illegal and Pakistan will do everything to prevent India from this fencing attempt.

Pakistan: Government Says Against Partition of Afghanistan

BK1303055596 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 0200 GMT 13 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Senate was told yesterday that Pakistan is pursuing a principled policy on Afghanistan, which is based on the principle of non-interference and support for UN peace efforts. Speaking on a point of objection raised by Raja Mohammad Zafarul Haq in the Senate yesterday, Federal Minister Professor N.D. Khan said that the present government does not believe in the partition of Afghanistan, and it will not be a party to any such move. He said that there might be some differences between Pakistan's and Iran's points of view; however, both want to see peace and tranquillity restored in Afghanistan.

Anwar Saifullah Khan, minister of petroleum and natural resources, in reply to an adjournment motion sought by Hafiz Hussain Ahmad, said that the government is considering an Iranian request to conduct a survey for the laying of a gas pipeline between Iran and India through Pakistan. The federal minister said that the project might also be beneficial to Pakistan because it will help to supply additional gas and will accelerate government efforts to supply gas to every home in the country.

On a point of objection raised by Senator Ishtiaq Azhar over the killing of Naim Sheri and one of his associates in Karachi, Professor N.D. Khan said that the people of Karachi have breathed a sigh of relief because the situation has become normal in the city due to government efforts.

Pakistan: Gas Shortage Forces Imports From Iran, Qatar, Turkmenistan

BK1103102096 Karachi BUSINESS RECORDER in English 10 Mar 96 p 1,14

[Report by Sikander Hayat]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad: Pakistan is anxious to have imported gas injected into its national system within the next three years from at least one of the three projects being negotiated with Iran, Qatar an Turkmenistan.

Sources in the energy sector said Pakistan's gas fields were fast running out due to the dramatic demand for this cheap and clean source and unless imported gas was made available the country might face serious gas shortage. By the turn of the century the government has to ensure a major new source of gas supply which, they said, would be only possible by tapping foreign gas fields.

The government's determined efforts to re-open the overland route to Turkmenistan through western Afghanistan, are aimed at having primarily oil and gas pipelines between Turkmenistan and Pakistan. The Rabbani government, which had initially agreed to the project and then voiced opposition, might come round to accepting it, these sources added.

Meanwhile, Pakistan has dropped its opposition to the Iranian plan to lay a gas and oil pipeline to India through its territory. But informed sources do not see the Iranian project as feasible, and if nothing else, opposition by the United States was bound to make its financing impossible.

The twin-pipeline transmitting gas and oil separately from Turkmenistan to Pakistan is being undertaken by the Unocal of the United States in collaboration with Delta Oil Co. of Saudi Arabia. Pakistan Government officials were given comprehensive briefing by the Unocal experts early this year.

The eight billion dollars project envisages a gas pipeline from Dauletabad gas field, about 160 kms inside Turkmenistan from the Afghanistan border and an oil pipeline form Chardzhou. The 1271 kms gas pipeline will terminate at Sui and will be built by the Unocal at unestimated cost of $3 billion.

The Dauletabad gas filed has about 45 trillion cubic feet of gas reserves.

A press release issues by the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry [FPCCI] gave the interesting information that Tariq Osman Hyder, Ambassador of Pakistan to Turkmenistan who called on Engineer Wazirzada M. Idrees Khan, Acting Chairman on Saturday, FPCCI at Federation House, Karachi, suggested that Pakistan and Turkmenistan enter into a barter arrangement under which Turkmenistan supply gas to Pakistan through a pipeline running via Afghanistan and in return, Pakistan provide equal worth of consumer goods to Turkmenistan. He said that Turkmenistan was self- sufficient in natural gas and was already supplying it to Ukraine, Armenia and Georgia.

Engr. Wazirzada M. Idrees Khan stated that trade with Turkmenistan was continuously increasing. Pakistan exported goods worth $9.8 million to Turkmenistan in 1994-95 against exports of $1.66 million in 1993-94, while imports stood at $0.38 million in 1994-95 with almost no imports last year. He said he hoped that the bilateral trade would continue to foster.

Pakistan: OIC Assistance Group on Bosnia Adopts Declaration

BK1203154996 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1400 GMT 12 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The third meeting of the OIC [Organization of the Islamic Conference] Assistance Mobilization Group for Bosnia-Herzegovina, which concluded its deliberations in Islamabad today, has reaffirmed the need for maintaining continuity of the group in providing assistance in various fields to Bosnia in the post-Dayton period. The declaration adopted at the end of the two-day meeting was spelt out at a news conference this afternoon. The chairman of the group, Kamil Jaffrey, told newsmen that the meeting urged OIC member countries as well as international community to actively contribute toward reconstruction and rehabilitation of war-torn Bosnia. It reaffirmed complete solidarity with the government and people of Bosnia in their efforts to establish peace and safeguard their sovereignty.

Mr. Kamil Jaffrey later told PTV representative, Jaffar Bilgrami, about the important features of the meeting. [Begin Kamil Jaffrey recording] The role that we can play, the contribution that we can make in order to push for the impartial and effective implementation of the Dayton agreements in both fields — civilian and military. [as heard; end recording]

The deputy foreign minister of Bosnia, Dr. Hasan Dervisbigovic, expressed satisfaction over the deliberations.

[Begin Dervisbigovic recording] We do need now economic support, especially support in economic reconstruction. It means that the goals of this meeting were just to switch on this reconstruction issue for the attention of this group and we think that this attempt was successful. [end recording]

Pakistan: Spokesman Expresses Concern Over Attack on Kashmiri Leaders

BK1203145996 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1400 GMT 12 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A Foreign Office spokesman has expressed serious concern at the increasing level of harassment of leaders of All Parties Hurriyat Conference [APHC] and supporters of the Kashmiri movement in occupied Kashmir. He was commenting on the reports of the arrest of prominent APHC leader, Syed Shabbir Shah, twice in the last four days and disappearance of Jalil Andrabi, who has been missing for the last few days. The spokesman also deplored the attack on the house of prominent [Pakistan Television] journalist, Mr. Ghulam Nabi Khayal, and other recent attacks on the persons and properties of APHC leaders. The spokesman urged the international community to exercise pressure on India and prevent it from committing these atrocities against innocent unarmed civilian Kashmiri leaders.

Pakistan: National Assembly To Debate Indian Attacks on Azad Kashmir

BK1203145096 Islamabad THE NATION in English 12 Mar 96 pp 1,13

[Report by Staff Reporter in Islamabad]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The National Assembly agreed on Monday to debate the issue of recent Indian rocket attack on Kahuta Forward in the AJK [Azad Jammu and Kashmir] on Tuesday (today).

The decision was reached following a lengthy dialogue between the Treasury and the Opposition benches regarding the fixing of time for the said debate. The Treasury, particularly the Parliamentary Secretary for Foreign Affairs, wanted to take up when the Foreign Minister was present in the House. The Opposition, however, demanded that, given its national security implications, the issue should be discussed immediately.

Gohar Ayub, Deputy Leader of Opposition in the Assembly, said that the issue related to the Ministry of Defence and as such the Foreign Minister had nothing to do with it.

Minister of State for Law and parliamentary Affairs Raza Rabbani argued that the government was in fact not opposing the motion; rather, the Parliamentary Secretary had opposed the motion only to give a statement. He pointed out that earlier the Opposition had agreed to take up the issue later. It was only in the House that it had changed its stance. He agreed to Opposition's suggestion that Tuesday would not be a Private Members Day and "will be treated as the government's day." The debate on Indian rocket attack on Kahuta Forward, he said, could be taken up on Tuesday (today).

Earlier, Gohar Ayub Khan had moved the adjournment motion regarding the rocket attack by India on Forward Kahuta in Azad Kashmir and said he could not understand why the government is not willing to take up such a sensitive issue. He criticised government's foreign policy and said it needs to be discussed keeping in view Pakistan's relations with other countries.

Pakistan attracted dollar 2664.20 million foreign direct and portfolio investment from July 1993 to December 1995, State Minister for Finance Makhdoom Shahabuddin told National Assembly here on Monday. He was responding to a question by Opposition deputy Mian Muhammad Munir.

He said the portfolio investment during this period included dollar 862.2 million. He said government has taken progressive economic policies resulting in the massive foreign investment in the country.

Responding to a question by Rao Qaiser Ali Khan of Okara, he said bonus shares of Rs[rupees] 8.939 million equivalent to dollar 296 million in 1993 and Rs 17.271 million in 1994 were issued against Iranian investment in Security Papers Limited. However, he said Iran and China have not made any fresh investment in Pakistan. But, added, Beijing has promised to rectify the trade balance holding out the hope that Chinese investment in Pakistan would start soon.

When asked to specify the steps taken to make up the deficiency in the defence budget due to devaluation of rupee, he said Rs 2.3 billion will be provided to defence services during 1995-96 to make up the deficiency in current financial year's budgetary allocation.

In reply to a question by Mian Abdul Waheed, the Junior Minister for Finance said total budgetary deficit for the current financial year 1995-96 is estimated at Rs. 98.9 billion which is 4.6 per cent of GDP.

Answering a question by Opposition Deputy Mian Amjad Yasin, he said on July 3, 1994 the Karachi Stock Exchange Shares Price Index stood at 2338.91 points. He continued that index touched lowest level of 1323.53 point on 28 November 1995.

Listing the reasons for decline, he said the major causes are Mexican financial crisis, rise in U.S. interest rates, law and order situation in Karachi, poor cotton crop during 1994, liquidity crunch. He said the government has taken a number of steps for the betterment of the stock market which included. Institution Fund have been allowed to invest up to 10 per cent of their funds in shares of listed companies. Insurance companies to be treated at par with other investors in respect of exemption from capital gains tax on their investment. Privatization Commission to pay outstanding amount of Rs 588.2 to NIT [National Investment Trust] and ICP [Investment Cooperation of Pakistan] so that they could invest in the stock market. All autonomous bodies engaged in the capital markets operations including NIT and ICP will have maximum flexibility in their operations and will not be required to invest in Stock Exchanges.

Replying to a question, Mr Shahabuddin said 11 foreign companies are doing general/life insurance business in the country. He said in reply to a query by Jama'at-i-Islami MNA [Member of National Assembly], Muzaffar Ahmed Hashmi that under the regular scheme 8,186 persons have applied for tractor loans during the current financial year. He said all the applications were accepted.

To another question, he said during 1995, 1242 million tones edible oil worth dollar 1009.3 million was imported. He responded in negative that any bonded warehouse is run by the employees of the Custom House.

Makhdoom Shahabuddin, to a question by Chaudhry Muhammad Barjees Tahir, said the total number of bank notes of all denomination and on Rupee one currency notes in circulation as on 31-12-1994 were 5,026,182,579. On 31-12-95 they were 5,433,872,660. To a question by Rana Zahid Tauseef, he said 17 units have been privatised by the government from November 1993 to February 1, 1996.

PPI [Pakistan Press International] adds: The Minister of State for Finance Makhdoom Shahabuddin in reply to a question by Mian Muhammad Munir told the House on Monday afternoon, that an additional amount Rs 2.3 billion will be provided to defence services during 1995-96 to make up the deficiency in current financial years budgetary allocation on account of devaluation.

In reply to another question by Mian Abdul Wahid, the Minister informed the House that the total budgetary deficit for the current financial year 1995-96 is estimated at Rs 98.9 billion that 4.6 per cent of the GDP.

Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka: Minister Writes on Devolution Proposals

BK1103055096 Colombo SUNDAY OBSERVER in English 10 Mar 96

[Article by Professor G.L. Peiris, Sri Lankan Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, Deputy Minister of Finance, and Deputy Minister of Planning: "Devolution: Its Constitutional Context" — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The People's Alliance government has consistently reiterated its commitment to comprehensively revamp the constitutional structure obtaining in Sri Lanka. Several features of the Constitution which are repugnant to the highest ideals of democracy have resulted in widespread disenchantment with the constitutional order among all sections of the Sri Lankan polity.

— The near-autocratic presidency overshadowing the other branches of Government,

— insufficient safeguards of fundamental rights enshrined in the Constitution,

— the lack of opportunity for meaningful and effective judicial review of legislation,

— the lack of adequate provision securing the independence of the public service,

— the meaningless and burdensome provisions relating to the devolution of power incorporated into the Constitution by the 13th Amendment which have proved to be of little practical utility.

— the minutiae relating to a host of matters which are inappropriate in a constitutional document which, ideally, should encapsulate the broad principles and ideals governing the State and which, by their very nature, are fundamentally different to an ordinary statute which provides such a detailed exposition of the law.

There are some features of the present Constitution which demand improvement and coherent reconstruction.

Mandate for Constitutional Reform

It is an uncontestable fact that the people of Sri Lanka unreservedly and categorically endorsed the People's Alliance pledge to revamp the constitutional structure in keeping with its stated objectives of peace, prosperity, justice and the achievement of a system in consonance with the principles of good governance. This approval was evident at three successive elections held in 1994. The Government of the President stands by that promise, strengthened by its sincerity of purpose. It is in pursuance of this unequivocal mandate the Government received from the people of Sri Lanka that prompt steps were taken to initiate the process of constitutional reform.

The Parliamentary Select Committee on the Constitution, under the Chairmanship of Prof. G.L. Peiris, the

Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, has already reviewed several chapters of the proposed new Constitution and has published the same in the media. This measure typifies the methodology adopted by the Government which has, at every available opportunity, sought to ascertain the views of the general public, professional associations, political parties and organisations relating to this matter of fundamental import. The lack of a two-thirds majority in Parliament has necessary for the Government to seek a consensus on the proposed constitutional provisions, and this will be reflected in the constitutional document which will enable truly national, as opposed to narrow parochial or partisan, interests to find expression in the Constitution.

This consensus, when achieved, will ensure that the new Constitution is representative of the will of the people and will be that much stronger for it. The process of reform undertaken in this manner will, though less expedient than it would be if the Government had an overwhelming majority in Parliament, ensure that the new Constitutional document will prove more acceptable to succeeding generations of Sri Lankans, thus guaranteeing its durability as a living entity seeking to fulfil the aspirations of all sections of Sri Lankan society.

Sri Lanka's contemporary history has demonstrated that Constitutions introduced by Governments with a two-thirds or five-sixths majority, as was the case in 1972 and 1978, have invariably been rejected by succeeding regimes. This very strength in the legislature has proved to be the Constitution's downfall, as there has been very little representation of alternative viewpoints in the Constitutions so drafted. It is expected that the new Constitution will preclude the inclusion of this inherent weakness that has characterized these two Constitutions.

Problems in the Process

Constitutional reform is an intricate and complex enterprise involving the balancing of competing interests in keeping with the larger national interest. While this in itself is a task of considerable magnitude, the subject matter dealt with is also of considerable sophistication. It is, therefore, impractical if not foolhardy to attempt the piecemeal reform of the Constitution with little or no consideration being paid to the manifold interconnecting relationships that characterize a document such as a Constitution. The amendment of a principal feature of the Constitution such as the Presidency has to be undertaken in conjunction with the other related aspects. If not, the primary objective of clarity and consistency, fundamental to an effort directed at the amendment of the Constitution, will not be met.

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The 13th Amendment to the Constitution although it purportedly did not alter the nature of the Constitution from unitary to another category, wrought some basic changes in the political structure of Sri Lanka. Government power, hitherto concentrated in the centre, was sought to be shared among Provincial Councils in order that a degree of self-governance within strict limits could be enjoyed by the inhabitants of the Provinces. However, the existence of Article 76 which endowed the national Parliament with supreme legislative power in all spheres which could not be delegated to any other institution, militated against such power sharing. The inherent contradictions that will invariably result from such an ad hoc approach to constitutional reform, could only result in a worsening of the very situation the Amendment sought to resolve.

Devolution of power, as proposed by the Government, has to be viewed within the large perspective of comprehensive constitutional reform if the scope and content of devolution is to be properly understood. Comprehension of the general constitutional context within which the devolution proposals will be implemented, is therefore vital.

There are many features of the proposed Constitution, some of which have been made public, some of which are in the process of formulation and others which exist only at a conceptual level, which will have a decisive impact upon the operation of the devolution proposals. These provisions, all of which are consistent with the general philosophy underpinning the new Constitution, will be enacted only after full discussion before the Select Committee.

Some of the characteristics referred to above are:

The Presidency

The Government of President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga, is unshaken in its commitment to abolish the Executive Presidency established by the 2nd Republican (1978) Constitution, currently in force. While the devolution proposals speak of many instances in which the President takes action in relation to the proposed Regional Councils, it must be remembered that what is contemplated is a mere ceremonial or titular Presidency acting on the advice of the Prime Minister and the Cabinet. The President will be appointed by Parliament and the office is fundamentally different to the all- powerful institution introduced by the 1978 Constitution. This is made clear by the draft Chapter on the Presidency already presented to the Select Committee and made public. It is implicit, therefore, that when the President appoints a Regional Governor or assumes the authority of a Regional Council in certain circumstances, he is acting upon the advice of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

Fundamental Rights

The jurisdiction of the Supreme Court that may be invoked in instances of alleged violations of fundamental rights by State action (including executive and administrative action) extends to alleged violations by Regional Administrations as well. This aspect is clearly demonstrated by the Supreme Court questioning the action of existing Provincial Councils where they are alleged to have violated the rights of Sri Lankans. This jurisdiction will apply to the newly established regional administrations with no qualifications whatever. One fear that has consistently been articulated by those who are opposed to devolution is that a Regional Administration composed primarily of persons of one community would invariably act in a manner detrimental to the minority community or communities living in that Region — be it a Sinhalese minority in the North or a Tamil minority in the South.

Explicit provision has been incorporated in the Chapter of the new Constitution conferring jurisdiction on the Supreme Court to inquire into actions of the Regional Administrations where persons allege that their rights have been violated. If a Regional Administration purports to discriminate against an individual or group in a manner that is violative of the Fundamental Rights in the Constitution whether it be in relation to purchase of land, access to public services opportunity for employment or any other subject within their competence, their action can be reviewed by the Supreme Court and relief can be granted speedily and effectively.

Judicial Review of Legislation

The exclusion of post-enactment judicial review of legislation from the present Constitution is viewed by the Government as unfortunate. This power of judicial review which ensures that the legislature does not violate basic postulates of the Constitution such as the fundamental rights that are enshrined in it, are of primary significance, and this safeguard will apply to both national and regional legislatures. This is particularly relevant in a constitutional context where laws enacted by Parliament and statutes enacted by a Regional Council are of equal authority in their respective spheres of competence. This safeguard is considerably enhanced by the incorporation of explicit provision relating to the review of Regional Council Legislation by the Supreme Court. Just as the acts of the Regional administration are reviewed by the Apex Court in the exercise of its jurisdiction in relation to fundamental rights, the Regional Legislature's acts are subject to the scrutiny of the highest judicial authority as well. The yardstick by which the respective administrative and legislative actions are evaluated is the extensive Bill of Fundamental Rights entrenched in the Constitution.

Legislative Power

Regional Councils' and Parliament's legislative competence is limited by the subjects enumerated in the respective lists. The confusion that would result in the overlapping of authority in this area which characterizes the present unsatisfactory situation obtaining under the Concurrent List made operative by the 13th Amendment, would be eradicated. The amendment of Article 76 will give each legislative body exclusive of legislative power within prescribed constitutional limits. This will ensure effective devolution of power within the framework of the Constitution. The clear demarcation of areas of respective legislative competence between the centre and the Regions will preclude attempts by a delinquent Regional legislature to encroach on the subjects and functions properly falling within the purview of the National Legislature. Thus no matters of national importance, assigned to the centre, can be acted upon by the Regions.

Writ Jurisdiction

Just as the competence of the legislative institutions is limited by the power of the courts to review legislation, the discretion sought to be bestowed on administrative bodies is circumscribed by the powers of the courts to review administrative action and provide remedies by the issue of prerogative writs. These bodies cannot exceed their authority to the detriment of the individual and, if they seek to do so, this power of the court is an important check that will ensure that they function within the prescribed ambit of competence.

The proposals envisage this power being exercised by the Regional High court which will function subordinate to the overriding jurisdiction of the Apex Court situated at the Centre. This measure will enable the limitation of discretionary power vested in the Regional Councils in keeping with well established principles of law at the regional level. This proposed system will be greatly preferable to the current system, as day-to-day problems of the people can be effectively redressed at a local level through institutions situated in the regions without having to seek redress at the Centre, and this is at the core of the ideal of devolution.

The proposals contain, in explicit language, provisions whereby unilateral attempts to dissolve the "indissoluble Union of Regions" may be effectively forestalled. The preamble to the proposed new Constitutions establishes the principles of unity, independence and sovereignty of the nation as essential attributes underpinning the entire Constitution. Furthermore, stringent provisions are incorporated whereby the Centre may take decisive steps to preserve the unity of he nation. Those who have expressed reservations regarding the advisability of such a large-scale devolution of power will find their apprehensions to be totally misconceived.

It is evident from the above that very considerable constitutional safeguards exist which would prevent the proposed Regions from exercising their powers to the detriment of:

a) inhabitants of the region;

b) inhabitants of other regions;

c) other Regions and their administrations; or

d) the nation in its entirety.

The whole emphasis of the proposals in the new Constitution is placed on the enabling of Regions to handle their own affairs, as defined in the Regional List, with a minimum of interference from the Centre. The limitations placed on their powers are defined in the draft Constitutional document and are necessary in the larger national interest. The Centre will act in co—ordination with Regions when it is necessary to implement schemes in which both share a commonality of interest. This will ensure smooth administration at both the Central and Regional level and collaborative efforts, where necessary, will ensure that Regions will receive the benefit of expertise available at the Centre and the Centre will derive a local perspective in the implementation of its projects. This harmonious coexistence will be a prerequisite for effective and sustained developmental activity.

The proposed system will, therefore, meet the dual objectives sought to be realized by the People's Alliance Government, namely: peace through a just and honourable political solution; and prosperity through an effective administrative system supporting development initiatives at regional and national levels.

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